

THE
S T O R M;

OR, THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
N A N C Y and L U C Y.
In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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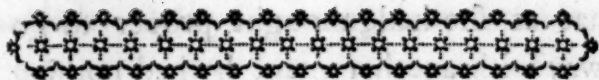
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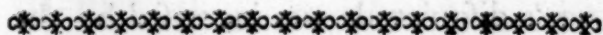
Five money L H


YOUNG, J. H.

1795-2-06-25



THE
S T O R M;
A N O V E L.



HEN Lucy had been a week in her melancholy situation, her patience was quite exhausted. She then sent a letter to Delwyn's lodgings in Pall-Mall: filled with complaints of absence, and intreaties for his return to her; earnestly requesting him, if he did not chuse to return, to let her live with him wherever it was most agreeable to him.

To this letter he made a very short answer: He informed her, concisely,

VOL. II.

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that

that as she had thought proper to go away with another man, he had nothing more to say to her; adding, in the common, but low style of an *advertisement*, that he should not pay any debts which she might contract for the future.

It is impossible to say how much Lucy's disquietude was increased by the perusal of so mortifying a reply to her letter. Tears, fits, and every thing that could express the horror and grief which she felt on being so cruelly treated by the man for whom she had deserted her father, and her friends, strongly painted the distress to which she was driven.

She did not know, at first, what measure to take.—This moment she thought of sending another letter; the next, of going herself. However, when she read over again the letter which had so much afflicted and embarrassed her, and found
that

that Mr. Delwyn peremptorily forbade her to come after him any more, assuring her, at the same time that he should throw all her letters into the fire without reading them, she, rationally enough, exclaimed, "Why should I write to him? To what purpose should I go to him?"

At last she thought of sending for Rivers, tho' he was the man on whose account she had been so ill used: but, conscious of her innocence, she was indifferent about the suspicions injuriously harboured against her.

Rivers came immediately. He was ignorant, indeed, of the false accusation pointed at him by Delwyn, but had he been acquainted with it, he would not have been deterred by it from going to her assistance.

He found her almost choaked with passion and grief; but the former was predominant.

After having said every thing he could think of to soothe her, and to compose her mind, he left her in order to set out in search of Delwyn, promising to return to her as soon as possible.

All his friendly endeavours to find him were ineffectual: he had quitted his lodgings in Pall-Mall. The people of the house declared that they did not know whither he was gone, nor could he prevail on them to give the slightest intelligence about him.

Chagrined to have no better news to communicate, he returned to Lucy.— She was, at first, half-distracted; but, at length, grew a little more calm, as she really felt hardly any uneasiness merely on Delwyn's account. Her chief concern

was

was that she had been neglected by him, and that Rivers, Mrs. Banks, &c. should know that she had been so treated.

She then desired Rivers to advise her what to do.

He told her that he thought it would be best for her to live as private as possible in the place where she was. "When "Delwyn," continued he, "reflects seriously on what he has done, he will, "I hope, come to look for you; and "when he finds that you have exactly "complied with his former injunctions "by keeping yourself retired, and living "frugally, he may, perhaps, be reconciled to you."

Lucy, did not, by any means, relish a plan so little suited to her taste, but as she could not refuse to subscribe to it, without drawing upon herself the disapprobation of the few friends she had

left, she promised to be guided by the proposer of it; desiring him, however, at the same time, to take no notice of what had passed between her and Mr. Delwyn, to her father and sister, as she imagined that if he should hear of her having mentioned his behaviour to her family, and friends, he might be still more displeased with her.

Rivers complied with her request, thinking that it was occasioned by her discretion, and by her love for Delwyn; but she was entirely governed by vanity and pride. She could not bear to have her father, and especially her sister, imagine that she could, possibly, be treated in such a manner by any man, and she was sanguine enough to believe that her beauty would still make either Delwyn or some other man ready to repair all the injuries which she had endured.

Before

Before he left her, Rivers, supposing that she might be in want of money, presented a twenty pound bank note to her.

She received it without the least hesitation, telling him that, notwithstanding what Mr. Delwyn had written, he must be answerable to him for the re-payment of it.

Rivers replied—"We shall not differ about such a trifle," and took leave of her, to go to Mrs. Banks.

Mrs. Banks and Miss Ashly were exceedingly sorry to hear that Delwyn and Lucy were upon such indifferent terms, for the sake of her family. Mrs. Banks desired Rivers to let *her* defray her expences till Delwyn was reconciled to her.

Rivers answered, "You shall do every thing you please, provided you will consent to make me happy."

A request so agreeable to her own wishes could not meet with a refusal.

Every thing was now agreed upon relating to the ceremony, but before she made a general surrender to Rivers, Mrs. Banks remitted the two thousand pounds, already mentioned, to Nancy Peyton, with a very genteel letter, in which she told her, she had endeavoured by that proof of her friendship to alleviate her father's concern, and her own, upon her sister's account: She mentioned not, however, a single word about her approaching marriage, which was solemnized before Nancy's answer arrived, tho' it was written as soon as she and her father could recover from the surprize into which Mrs. Banks's very unexpected, and generous behaviour had thrown them.

Rivers

Rivers was a very elegant bridegroom; his figure was attractive, and his cloaths were happily chosen; but his carriage to his new-made bride was particularly striking; it was a pattern for all men in *his* situation.—Desire shone in his fine eyes; desire, under the correction of delicacy. His bride seemed to be lost in admiration of him, as his attentions were uncommon; yet she sometimes was afraid of appearing too tender, tho' there was a propriety blended with her love which rendered her inexpressibly engaging.

Louisa was all joy and mirth, and said a thousand lively nothings to Sir George, who would fain have prevailed on her to think a little more seriously about *him*.

No sooner was Rivers in possession of his wife's fortune than he immediately gave directions to his lawyer, tho' with-

out her knowledge, to settle all upon her, excepting only a decent provision for himself.

When she became acquainted with what he had done, she tenderly expostulated with him concerning so unusual a conduct, and attempted to persuade him to make an erasure, but he would on no account hear of it.

The season now approached, in which Mrs. Rivers had always been accustomed to distinguish herself by her hospitality, and rejoicing the hearts of her poor neighbours and tenants. She just mentioned her customary proceedings to her husband, assuring him, however, almost in the same breath, that she had not the least inclination to do any thing which was not perfectly agreeable to him.

Rivers fondly reproved her for supposing him to be so tasteless as not to pre-

fer what merited *her* approbation to every thing else.

Accordingly they prepared to set out for Derbyshire.

Rivers, while the preparations were making, rallied Louisa, and told her that he insisted upon having his friend Medway of the party, but she declared so violently against his *motion* that he gave up the point; tho' not till he had affirmed that she could never have so fine an opportunity of knowing whether she should like him or not, as by living in the same house with him.

She replied, "By having so much of
"his company, I may, perhaps, see him
"in a thousand disagreeable lights, and
"be unable to endure him at all."

Before they left London, they all made a visit to Lucy.

Lucy, having heard nothing about Delwyn, shewed the greatest discontent, and inveighed against the dullness of her situation in the most forcible expressions.

Mrs. Rivers endeavoured to render her as easy as possible by furnishing her with a sufficient sum to provide every thing necessary for her till her return to London; which was to be soon after Christmas.

When they arrived at the manor, the servants celebrated the marriage of their lady: but Mr. Peyton and Nancy knew nothing of it till Mr. and Mrs. Rivers and Miss Ashly entered the cottage.

The latter of those ladies told them that they were to wish her friend joy.

The good old man delivered his congratulations with a heart-felt satisfaction, and with the most grateful language
thank-

thanked Mrs. Rivers for the trouble she had given herself about his Lucy, and for the notice she had taken of her.

The shock was too great for Nancy : it came upon her too suddenly : she turned pale : she was ready to faint.

Rivers, excessively pained at the effect which the discovery of his marriage had on her, hastened to support her ; but he was really too much agitated himself, to be of any great service to her.

Miss Ashly, perceiving his embarrassment, good naturedly relieved him by busying herself about Nancy, who presently recovered.

Turning her eyes towards Rivers, who had not quitted her hand, but who was looking on her with eyes full of tenderness and compassion, she, faintly, said, " You have recalled every affectionate idea of my poor sister—It is too much for me."

As

As she knew, while she spoke those words, that they were not strictly true, a conscious blush tinged her pallid cheeks, and excited new emotions in Rivers, who, fearful of discovering them, quitted her hand with a gentle pressure; then, going to Mrs. Rivers, who was looking at Nancy with real concern, said, "We had better leave her a little to recover her spirits; she is quite overcome with the different passions of sorrow and gratitude; sorrow for her sister's unhappiness, and gratitude for your generous behaviour to her."

Nancy heard not these last words; for Rivers, taking his wife's hand under his arm, led her into the garden; ashamed, however, to neglect the payment of her thanks to Mrs. Rivers, she followed her as soon as she could tolerably compose herself, and expressed the high sense she had

had of the favours conferred upon her : she then, without casting a single glance at Rivers, retired to her own apartment, pleading a sudden indisposition :—she was truly indisposed.

Mrs. Rivers, and Miss Ashly, soon afterwards, wished Mr. Peyton a good morning ; having first invited him to bring Nancy, as soon as she was able to go abroad, to spend a day with them.

With regard to Lucy, concerning whose happiness her good father's solicitude was very great ; they told him, “ that they thought nothing more could “ be done for her till she had heard from “ Delwyn, as Rivers's friendly offices, on “ her account, had been so injuriously “ misconstrued.

In their way home they called upon Cropley.

The

The worthy curate was walking, with a book in his hand, in his little garden.

He started at the sight of Louisa; his book fell to the ground; he flew to compliment his agreeable friends upon their arrival; and they not only insisted upon taking him home to dinner, but made him promise to endeavour to get somebody to do his duty for him, while he spent a week at the manor.

Nothing could have given him more pleasure than such an invitation: the thoughts of passing whole days in looking at, and listening to, Miss Ashly, were transporting, and he hastened to enjoy the long, wished-for satisfaction. But he soon found, by experience, that pleasure and pain are very closely allied.—Rivers, by rallying Louisa about Sir George Medway, alarmed him; still more was he alarmed at her lively answers,

swers, which induced him to believe that she had no aversion to Sir George, that he was, if not a favoured lover, at least, not a quite unhappy one, as he was not, in *his* opinion, destitute of hope.

Poor Cropley, though he could not have formed any rational expectations before the disclosure of this intelligence, was exceedingly affected by it; he became very sensible that he really loved Miss Ashly to an extravagant degree; and he also felt that it would be extremely difficult for him to shun her for the future.—Her society gave him infinite delight; he could not, therefore, think of losing it for ever, without the greatest disquiet. To see her in the arms of another, would be misery unutterable.—“The wisest thing I can do, will be, to give her up at once. But who is wise when he is in love? Besides, as
“ I shall,

“ I shall, in all probability, be soon deprived of my present happiness, why must I resign it before the hour of deprivation arrives ? ”

On a strict enquiry into the state of his heart, the enamoured curate found he was far enough in love with Louisa, to feel, that the assurance of her being tenderly attached to *him*, and of wishing to make him happy, had they been more upon an equality, would have made him resign his breath the next moment with pleasure. He determined, therefore, to stay as long as he could at the Manor, and to seize every opportunity of conversing with her.

Luckily for him, as *he* thought, more opportunities offered themselves than he could have expected. As Rivers, and his wife, were very much taken up with each other, Miss Ashly was left to entertain

tertain *him*, whom she soon saw strongly attached to her, though she had no idea of his being so fond of her as he really was.

On a nearer acquaintance with Crop-ley, Miss Ashly found him exceedingly amiable : He had read all the best English authors, and not only hurried them over, merely for a momentary amusement, he had read them with taste, he had studied them with attention, and was intimately acquainted with their respective beauties, many of which he could repeat ; and he always repeated them, in a manner expressive of his own tender feelings, and with very significant additions. He had also a melodious voice, and his articulation was very energetic, especially, when his heart was concerned in the subject which demanded his elocution. His person was
extremely

extremely agreeable ; he was delicate, without being effeminate ; he had a refined understanding, and his manners were graceful.

Cropley, with all these external and internal advantages, could not well be an object of indifference to any woman whose heart was disengaged : and, it may be said, Louisa's was not *literally* engaged, as the man, on whom she could have most willingly bestowed it, was married ; married to her dearest friend.

Cropley's attentions to Miss Ashly, were not unobserved by her.—No woman is sorry to be admired, even if she dislikes the man.—Louisa did not certainly dislike Cropley, though she was not actually in love with him.—His continued assiduities, however ; the joy which sparkled in his eyes, when she approached, and the dejection which over-

overwhelmed him whenever she left him, were too obvious not to be remarked.— She was sometimes, indeed, prompted to smile at his appearance and behaviour, but never in a scornful way : her smiles were rather the smiles of observation and good nature ; yet she could not help beholding him in a ludicrous light, when his passion made him guilty of striking absurdities ; absurdities which would have been quite ridiculous, nay, disgusting, in a less agreeable man.

Mrs. Rivers, who soon perceived what the amiable curate was little able to hide, with all his efforts, told her young friend, one day, to what an extravagant degree he loved her.

She replied, laughing, “Why ay, that’s
“poor Copley’s fault ; if we ever *bad*
“entertained serious thoughts of each
“other, I should have been undone by
“his

“his violence. He is more likely,” continued she, with additional vivacity, “to devour a mistress, than to love her.”

It has been already said, that Louisa was no coquette; but though she would have thought any body mad who told her that she would marry Cropley, she did not think it necessary, as she had no such intentions, to be either four or five, haughty, or ill bred, to him. She had never thought of him as a lover, but she had, several times, declared to Mrs. Rivers, that she knew not any man better qualified to make a valuable friend, as she believed him to be a man of sense, honour, integrity, good nature, and sensibility.

With such a high opinion of him, it is not at all to be wondered at that she spent a great many happy hours in his company. She really conversed with him
upon

upon most subjects, with as much ease and freedom, as she did with Rivers; and, by so doing, rendered herself so extremely amiable in his eyes, that he became perfectly intoxicated with her society.

Frequently did Louisa say, that she had too high spirits, and that they would run away with her. Frequently did she ask him to read to her while she sat at her tambour, or drew landscapes, flowers, &c. &c. and sometimes she would rise up in the middle of her employments, throw her work from her, and tell him that she could not sit a moment longer.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Cropley,” said she, one day, to him, when she had started up in the midst of a fine passage he was reading to her from Thomson’s *Seasons*: “I am sensible that I am vastly
“too

“too giddy: yet, indeed, I take a great
“deal of pains to correct my viva-
“city.”

“And why should you take pains to
“change a humour which renders you
“exquisitely attracting?” replied he,
seizing both her hands, and looking
in her face with eyes full of tender-
ness.

Surprised at a behaviour which dis-
covered what she had actually for some
time suspected, she was also just then sorry
to see it, as she imagined it would lay
her under certain restraints, and force
her to abridge, considerably, the fami-
liarity with which she treated him.—
Such an abridgement she did not think
of with any pleasure, as she loved to
converse with all possible freedom, with-
in the pale of decency and good manners.

Drawing

Drawing away her hand, and looking serious, on a sudden, she cried, "Thank you, Sir, you have very genteelly corrected me; I shall now sit down to my work with great composure."

Poor Copley, half frightened out of his wits, lest he had offended her—not comprehending her raillery—looked aghast.

She saw his confusion, and pitied him: she wished, at the same time, to love him.

"Take up your book, Sir," said she; "take up your book, and read from the place where you left off."

On his hesitating, and appearing embarrassed, she snatched it from him, with a lively, but good natured air—"Come," cried she, "give *me* the book; as I have put you out, let me put you in again."

She, accordingly, read two or three lines, and with so much propriety, with so musical a voice, which she, judiciously, varied, softened, and raised, as the subject required a difference of articulation, that Copley was on the point of breaking into fresh raptures.

Giving him the book in a few moments, she said, "There, now you may go on."

Charming creature! whispered he to himself—He then went on tolerably, though with frequent interruptions in his voice from the flutter of his spirits; interruptions, however, which rather heightened the energy and the melody of the lines he repeated. She was indeed so well pleased with his elegant, and expressive utterance, that she made him a little compliment upon his elocution; but fearing to say too much concerning it,

it, she checked herself, by adding immediately, "Actually, Cropley, you owe me a speech, for I have the vanity now to think I have contributed to give new graces to your pronunciation."

"You give grace, you give life and soul to every thing I say and do—or think," cried he, quite enraptured: "my thoughts are so entirely engaged about you, that I seem to have lost myself: I exist only through you."

"Prodigious! what a flight!" replied she, laughing. "Well, positively, I will not praise you any more, for you strive so violently to excel, that you will run into absolute bombast, if I do not put a stop to your encomiums."

In this manner would she sometimes commend, and sometimes rally poor Cropley, who found, every hour,

new charms both in her person and manners, and began to dread leaving the manor.

Mrs. Rivers, agreeably to her promise, sent the coach to fetch Peyton and Nancy to dinner.

It returned empty—Nancy had been taken very ill—She had, indeed, been so affected by the sudden appearance of Rivers before her, married, and seemingly fond of his wife, that it was with the greatest difficulty she retained her senses. So much had she suffered from the constraint she put upon herself, that it threw her into a fever, and at the time Rivers's coach came for her, she lay quite delirious: she was raving about him to a degree which terrified her poor father, who gave her over, and consequently looked upon both his children as lost.

Mr.

Mr. Peyton, believing that neither Mrs. Rivers, nor even Rivers himself, now he was married, could afford his daughter any relief, and not chusing to expose her to their sight, in such a state, only returned a short message—"She is very much indisposed."

They all expressed their concern at her illness. Rivers, who suspected, and with reason, that he had, himself, but too great a share in it, felt it strongly, by the force of sympathy, though he carefully concealed his sensations. He dispatched his man privately to Peyton with a note, in which he declared his own, and Mrs. Rivers's concern, and begged he would send for the best physicians, and take all possible care of his amiable Nancy.—These were the very expressions Rivers made use of; and Peyton now comprehended the full mean-

ing of them: he comprehended it, and lamented the day on which he permitted the *two friends* to take shelter in *his house*.

Nancy, for some time, struggled with her distemper; her youth at last, and a naturally good constitution got the better of it, but she became exceedingly weak, and low.

Mrs. Rivers sent, frequently, to know how she did.

Rivers, tho' he did not let his uneasiness appear, was exceedingly anxious about her recovery.

She was out of danger, but it was a considerable time before it could be properly said that she was well.

As soon as she was able to see company, Mrs. Rivers, and Miss Ashly made her several visits, but Rivers always stayed at the manor.—“I cannot,”

said

said he, whenever he was solicited to go to the cottage, "be of any service to her, "and it hurts me to see Peyton in distress."

Cropley was, by this time, obliged to return home. His departure from Louisa was like the amputation of a limb. Louisa, herself, indeed, thought she should miss him, as he had been almost her constant companion while he was at the manor. She liked his conversation extremely. She told him, laughing, one day, that they were fit company for nobody but themselves. "You are melancholy mad," continued she, "and I am the reverse."

"I shall be both melancholy and raving," replied he, "when I have left you," fetching a deep sigh.

"Lord! what a pity!" answered she, smiling. "You should recover your senses

"senses when you are *from* me, or else
"you pay me no compliment by losing
"them *with* me."

"I shall be past all complimenting
"soon," replied he. "What we utter
"when deprived of our reason, can have
"no great meaning in it."

"Thankee, Copley," said she, laughing, "that is honest now, and as much
"as to say, that all you have been telling
"me is of no signification."

"Cruel!" answered he—"You are
"very well assured of the contrary; but,
"I deserve to be punished for daring to
"soar to an object so far above me:
"yet the meanest creature is permitted
"to gaze at the sun, is warmed, is che-
"rished by its enlivening rays."

"Yes; but if you gaze too intently,
"you may lose your sight, and then
"what

“ what will your privilege of staring
“ avail you?”

She uttered the last words merely from the sprightliness of her imagination, but he was ready to put a construction upon them adapted to his own feelings.

“ I am but too sensible of my danger,
“ madam.—’Tis past, and over—or
“ rather, indeed, it will last me my life.
“ The first sight of you deprived me of
“ my senses: I gazed till I quite lost
“ them, and then, being wild enough
“ for any thing, I madly presumed to
“ discover my sensations: yet I have still
“ reason enough to enable me to see the
“ immense difference between us, and
“ to implore your pardon for my presumption.”

Here he stopped, waiting for her reply.

By pausing, he not a little perplexed her. She was quite unprepared, not having expected so very clear an explanation. She blushed; she was disconcerted. She could not think of giving him any encouragement, and yet she did not like to increase the disquiet which he endured, she plainly saw, on *her* account. Pity, and perhaps a softer passion, pleaded strongly for him in her bosom. She turned away her face to hide the confusion which she wished she had not felt.

Her amiable, agitated lover stood looking at her alarmed, as he apprehended that her silence proceeded from her rising anger.

Turning again towards him, she with gentle eyes, and in soft accents, said—
“Leave me, Cropley; this is not a proper subject for us to talk upon; on
“every

"every other, I shall always listen to
"you with pleasure."

So mild a reproof at a time when he had expected a rough reprimand, increased his passion, as it gave him the highest idea of the sweetness of her temper. He so far obeyed her as only to thank her for her lenity in terms expressive of the greatest respect and tenderness; but, tho' he commanded his tongue to silence, upon the only interdicted theme, his eyes were still most eloquent, and he, involuntarily, discovered every other sign of the strongest emotions excited by love: it was impossible for him to hinder those emotions from being perceptible.

The next day, they were on a little ramble with Mr. and Mrs. Rivers; the latter, leaning on her husband's arm, left Miss Ashly to the care of Cropley.

While Cropley was helping Louisa over a bridge composed of nothing but a plank, without a rail to hold by, her foot slipped.

He caught her in his arms, to save her, but the tremor which he felt, on her being in so dangerous a situation, and the fluttering of his heart, on being obliged to press her close to his bosom, were so violent, that he was almost ready to let her fall into the water; and had she not exerted her own strength upon the critical occasion she would certainly have fallen.

She saw, she felt, she pitied his distress.—“Don’t be frightened, Sir,” said she, kindly, to him: “I am safe.”

He poured out a thanksgiving for her preservation, at the same time, pressing her hand, by way of gratitude, for her consideration for him, but the alarm

he

he had felt for her, had given such a shock to his sensibility that he scarce recovered it the whole day.

His agitated appearance, and behaviour were not lost upon her: they threw her into a train of thinking not at all unfavourable to him, as she was sure that he had not *affected* a concern for her: She saw, on the contrary, that he struggled to hide his sufferings lest they should either offend, or be disagreeable to, the only woman in the world whom he wished to please. She had not the least doubt of his loving her sincerely, but whether he would have thought of being in love with her, if she had not been mistress of such a fortune—that was a point about which she was in a state of some uncertainty. There appeared nothing, indeed, in his whole deportment to mark him for a mercenary man, but
men

men were, she thought, very fickle creatures.—“ Rivers is exceedingly attached
“ to his wife, and makes an unexcep-
“ tionable husband: but has she not
“ made him master of a large estate,
“ and raised him, from a trifling income,
“ to an affluent fortune?”

Louisa sat and ruminated upon all these things, and, consequently, appeared more serious than usual: She looked, indeed, full of thought, and by so looking planted thorns in Crompton's bosom.—“ What can make her so unusually
“ serious? Is she ill, or is she angry?
“ no signs either of anger or of illness
“ appear: She is, undoubtedly, there-
“ fore, thinking of Sir George Medway.”

In this manner did he torment himself, and he left her in despair, thoroughly convinced that she could never be any thing

thing to him, and that she would even be less to him than she *had* been.

Mr. and Mrs. Rivers, both, invited him to come, and see them as often as possible.

Louisa said nothing, but she looked as if she was loth to part with him.— Had it, indeed, been proper for her to ask him to stay, the duties of his profession would not permit his continuance at the manor. However, whenever they went to Peyton's, they always called on him, and took him home with them, when he could spare time to make a little elopement.

Rivers was frequently set down at Cropley's, while Mrs. Rivers and Miss Ashly went to see Nancy, who grew much better.—With her returning health, she made a firm resolution never more to think of Rivers, who was obliged, sometimes,

times, to call on her father that he might not appear particular; but he seldom stayed long, and at no time said a word to her, after having expressed his satisfaction at her recovery.

One day, when ~~he~~ had left the ladies at the cottage, and walked to Cropley's, he found the good curate employed in preparing a discourse upon resignation to the divine will, tho' he seemed not at all in a frame of mind likely to produce a composition on such a subject, as he never had looked more restless and discontented: never less capable of hiding his disquieting sensations.

Rivers, having cast his eye over his performance while he stepped out of the room to speak to one of his parishioners, complimented him, at his return, on the propriety of it, telling him that a man
who

who could think so justly, might brave all disappointments in this world.

“And yet,” replied the poor curate, with a heart-fetched sigh, “I am so little able to profit by what I have written for the benefit of others, that I am this very moment ready to sink under the weight of my distress. I cannot call what I feel a disappointment, because I never could rationally form any expectations; yet so extravagantly fond am I of Miss Ashly, that I do not think it possible for me to live without any hopes of making an impression upon her heart. I will, at the same time, allow, that I discover a species of insanity by such a declaration.”

“Why, to be sure,” replied Rivers, “it cannot be expected that such a fine, handsome girl as Louisa, with such a
“for-

“fortune at her own disposal, should sit
“down contented in a remote part of
“Derbyshire; and yet, Cropley, you
“have merit sufficient to touch any
“woman’s heart of a softer composition
“than hers: but I look upon her to be
“too giddy to be in love; she will never
“be made unhappy by that passion.”

“I would not have her made unhappy
“by any thing,” said Cropley, “and I
“know too well the pangs of unrequited
“love not to wish to have her preserved
“from *them*.”

Rivers told him, that he believed she
was in no danger of feeling them.
“Were she indeed, like Mrs. Rivers, or
“Nancy Peyton,” continued he, “I
“would not answer for her; the former I
“hope ever to guard against the slightest
“anxiety proceeding from indifference
“or neglect in the man whom she loves,
“and

“and I should be extremely happy to
“remove the disquiet which the latter has
“endured, which she has, quite contrary
“to my expectations, I confess, endur-
“ed; but as her sufferings have certain-
“ly been very painful, I wish, for her
“sake, that women were less susceptible
“of the tender passion, tho’ they can-
“not, I think, for our happiness, be too
“affectionately attached to us.”

Cropley applauded Rivers’s sentiments with regard to the two ladies who had so particularly distinguished him, and added, that he could not think Miss Ashly so volatile as he believed her to be.—“I do not doubt,” continued he, “but that she will be sufficiently kind
“to the man whom she blesses with
“her hand.—I am assured, however,
“that I shall never be that happy man,
“and I am very sensible that I cannot,
“with-

“without appearing distracted, look so
“far above me. Yet it is too late for
“me to change my mind; I do not in-
“deed, desire to change it; whether she
“is married, or unmarried, it will be
“my pleasure and my pride to admire
“her to the last moment of my exist-
“ence.”

Rivers now thought he talked madly, but he made great allowances for a man in love; and had he imagined that Louisa really was inclined to render him happy, or capable of relishing a domestic life with a man of Cropley's serious turn, he would have said something to encourage him to lay aside his melancholy ideas; but as he could not look upon her in the light Cropley did, he deemed it prudent not to raise hopes in him which might never be gratified.

Nancy

Nancy was, by this time, to all appearance, quite recovered. Mrs. Rivers very strongly invited her to come and stay at the manor, but she so earnestly begged to be excused that she left off pressing her.

Nancy, during the progress of her recovery, wrote to Lucy, out of pure kindness to her father, but received no answer.—The want of an answer gave the worthy old man fresh anxiety.

To calm his mind a little, Mrs. Rivers promised to send him a minute account of her. Soon afterwards, she and her husband, with Miss Ashly, made a farewell visit to him and Cropley.

Nancy bore the second parting from Rivers heroically.

Not in the least like a hero did the disconsolate curate take leave of Louisa. He endeavoured to muster up all his resolu-

resolution to his aid, but at the separating instant his fortitude forsook him, he fancied he saw her in Sir George's arms.—It was too much for him.

He was silent for a considerable time : he then caught her hand, all pale and trembling, and, in a faltering voice, said, “ Whatever may be your change
“ in life, Madam, do not, I beseech
“ you, entirely forget the man who
“ must doat on you while he draws his
“ breath, and who, tho’ conscious of
“ being, every way, undeserving of
“ your notice, yet from the respectfulness, and sincerity of his passion is entitled, at least, to that pity which you
“ have hitherto discovered for him;
“ much, indeed, has he hitherto wanted
“ it, but much more will he want it, when
“ you

"you are married to Sir George Medway."

Louisa coloured: she felt herself hurt at being obliged to give any kind of uneasiness to a man who really, she was very sensible, loved her to a great degree; and yet she could not think of marrying him in the situation they were both in. However, her good nature, or something more, tempted her, perhaps, to give him all the consolation in her power.

Holding out her hand to him, she said, "Who told you, Sir, that I was going to be married to Sir George Medway? You, really, entertain very unaccountable notions, and then are strangely alarmed at them: but be composed, Sir: I am not going to alter my situation in any shape, and I shall ever remember, as a friend, the
" many

"many civilities I have received from you."

With these words she turned to go out of the room.

He led her to the coach, wrung her hand, but could not utter another syllable.

She, too, was silent, till Rivers said something favourable of his friend the curate; she then replied, "Yes, he is, I believe, a very worthy man; but it is impossible, you know, for me to think of such an alliance."

The first thing they did, upon their arrival in town, was to send to Lucy's lodgings at C——, to know how she did, and why they had not heard from her.

The people of the house informed the messenger that she had been gone from them

them some time, and that they could give no intelligence about her.

Mrs. Rivers and Miss Ashly were surprised. Rivers was sorry, because he thought that Nancy would be rendered still more unhappy by the farther indiscretion of her sister. He was afraid, from what he had observed, that she was too much addicted to pleasure, and dissipation, and he determined to make it his business to find her out; to find out Delwyn also, though he had shunned him ever since his marriage with Lucy.

At length, by repeated enquiries, among their common acquaintance, he heard that he was at Bath.

To Bath, therefore, he dispatched a letter to him, in a very friendly manner. Seeming to believe that Lucy was with him, he told him that he was just come from the North, and that Mr. Peyton

and Nancy were very anxious about Mrs. Delwyn; adding, that he imagined if she wrote to her father he would be extremely glad to hear from her.

Receiving no answer to *that* letter, he still continued uncertain with regard to Lucy; uncertain whether she was with her husband or not.

Sir George Medway was one of their first visitors on their return to London, and perpetually fluttered about Louisa, who behaved to him with rather more reserve than she did before she went into Derbyshire. Not that she discovered any difference in Sir George: he was as handsome as ever, he dressed with as much elegance as ever, and he was not less assiduous to please than he ever *had* been; but his style of behaviour was, in every respect, so distinct from Cropley's, that

that she could not help marking their strongly-contrasted characters.

Sir George was tall, large, and fair: he had a commanding aspect, and a majestic manner.

Cropley was rather below the middle size, but there was a great deal of symmetry in his whole figure: his complexion was a clear brown. Sense and tenderness were strikingly expressed in his countenance; and there was an elegant simplicity in his appearance throughout, which could not but be very pleasing to any woman of delicacy and taste.—They were also quite different from each other as *lovers*; Sir George loved Louisa like a man of the world, who had seen a thousand fine women, and who had not only admired them, but received encouragement from them. He loved her like a man accus-

omed to indulge himself, and to be indulged: he was, indeed, such a veteran in the service of the ladies, that he felt none of those fears and terrors, nothing of that delicacy and timidity which made Cropley tremble whenever he spoke to her, and which as frequently awed him to silence.

Sir George, however, loved Louisa in an honourable way, and treated her with a flattering respect, but still he looked upon her only as a woman, a downright woman, though he swore, vehemently, at the same time, that she was a perfect divinity.

Cropley, on the other hand, had seen but few agreeable girls, none so agreeable to him as Miss Ashly was, in the strictest sense of the word.—He had never met a woman so handsome, so accomplished, so lively before, and

it

THE STORM 53

it was her vivacity, chiefly, which struck him: he had certainly never loved any woman so entirely before. Lucy Peyton was, indeed, handsome, and had, by the advances which she made to him, attracted his attention: she coaxed him, it may be said, into a kind of fondness for her, which he, ignorant of the passion she excited in him, mistook for tenderness, but when he became acquainted with Miss Ashly, he soon found that he never had been absolutely in love till then. The superiority, however, of her rank and fortune, and the proper reserve which she knew how to assume, when necessary, made him look on her as no easy conquest, supposing they had been more upon an equality. He had, indeed, so high an idea of her merit, that he not only called her, but believed her to be an angel; in other words,

a woman infinitely out of *his* reach.—
As he despaired, therefore, of being ever able to gain her, he behaved with a diffidence before her, which made him appear, as he really was, not only a more tender, but a more sincere lover than Sir George: and he, therefore, appeared in Louisa's eyes, vastly superior to his titled competitor: yet still Sir George Medway was a man of family and fortune, and Cropley only a poor country curate, buried in an obscure part of the North of England, descended from parents whom nobody knew, and possessed of an income but just sufficient to furnish him with the bare necessities of life. Any woman, however, might be happy with him, she thought, if it was not her own fault: and with regard to happiness with the baronet, she had doubts. She was almost afraid to come
to

to a resolution; yet when she considered that nothing could be more ridiculous than her hesitation, she determined to think no more of the curate; she determined to give all decent encouragement to his rival.

Being called on unexpectedly, one night, by a lady, and pressed by her to go to the opera, she consented, though she had *that* morning told Sir George, when he asked her where she should spend the evening, that she was engaged with Mrs. Rivers to make visits.

They had not been long in the pit before a little bustle in one of the upper side boxes made them look up.

Louisa thought she saw Sir George assisting a lady to come forward; she was not mistaken: he seated himself, afterwards, by her side.

This proceeding roused her curiosity, and she watched their motions. Several gentlemen were, she perceived, assiduous about the lady, who, in her opinion, very much resembled Mrs. Delwyn; but she was so altered by her dress, and at such a distance, that Louisa could make no certain decision concerning her person.

Lucy, though she had put on all the fine things in her possession to come to dine with Mrs. Rivers and Miss Ashly, before they went out of town, was but plainly dressed in a lustring negligée, with her hair unpowdered; but *this* Lucy was in a trimmed sack, over a hoop larger than the fashionable size—Her hair was dressed to an extravagant height; she had drop curls of an immoderate length, and her head was loaded with powder.

powder. She so strongly resembled Mrs. Delwyn, however, that Miss Ashly could not take her eyes off her; but she was too much taken up with herself, and her admirer—for Sir George appeared entirely in that character—to know or even distinguish her: neither did Sir George, believing *her* to be in another place, seem to recollect her, but threw his eyes over her among the rest, without making her an object of his attention.

Louisa was not, indeed, in a conspicuous part of the house, she was quite on the other side from the persons whom she strongly imagined to be Sir George and Mrs. Delwyn: she was only puzzled to account for their coming together.

On her return home, she acquainted Rivers, who had accompanied her friend

that evening, in her room, of what she had seen, who told her that he would call at Medway's house in the morning, and enquire about the affair.

He, accordingly went, at an early hour, he thought; but Sir George was gone out.

Pausing a moment, he slipped a crown into the servant's hand, and asked him concerning the lady whom Sir George attended to the opera,

"Mrs. Delwyn, of Half-moon Street," replied the fellow.

"A married lady?" said Rivers.

"A widow, sir," answered the servant, with an increased archness in his face, "her husband died abroad."

"I thought I knew her, but I did not know that she had changed her lodgings.—Is your master there now?"

"No, sir."

Rivers

Rivers then thinking that the present time was the fittest for his purpose, went immediately to Mrs. Delwyn's lodgings.

He was conducted up stairs by a smart footman in a genteel livery, and carried into a small, but elegantly furnished room, in which Mrs. Delwyn sat in a very fashionable undress at her toilet.

She rose, with an easy assured air, to receive him, and pointed to a chair opposite to her.

After having looked round him, Rivers sat down, and asked her how Mr. Delwyn did, adding, "How long has he been in town, madam?" A faint blush just tinged her cheeks at this question, of which she seemed to be ashamed, and she tried to conceal it as well as she could, by wiping her face with her handkerchief.

"I have neither seen him, sir," said she, "nor heard from him: happy should I be, if I had never seen him at all."

"I did not imagine, Mrs. Delwyn," replied he, "that you would have judged it prudent to change your lodgings without your husband's orders, at least, not without his leave."

This little reproof put her cheeks into a glow. Full of shame, vexation, and resentment, on having subjected herself to such a reprimand, though it was delivered in the gentlest terms, from a man who had, in her opinion, no right to interfere in her affairs, and who she had, sometimes, suspected of having winked at Delwyn's design to deceive her; she made a fierce reply, while the tears started from her eyes—"I have no husband,

"sir,

"sir, and am, therefore, accountable to
"nobody for my conduct."

Reflecting then on the state to which she had been decoyed, and to which she had, indeed, reduced herself, by her cruel behaviour to her indulgent father, and by indiscreetly consenting to run away with Delwyn, she felt her mind in a distracted state: she appeared to be agonized by passion and despair; she wept aloud, she wrung her hands, she accused Rivers, and all the world, of having conspired to plunge her into the situation she was in.

Rivers, however, believing that what she had said, proceeded from the poignant sensations of misery which she felt on the cruel neglect of Delwyn, and on her finding herself in a way of life, by her own choice, which she could not support without the assistance of people to whom she

she ought not, she knew, to be obliged, endeavoured to soothe her into a more composed frame of mind; assuring her, at the same time, that he had never been, in the least, accessory to her disappointments; that he was, on the contrary, exceedingly sorry she had met with any: adding, that he would do every thing in his power to remove the cause of her complaints; especially, if she would, herself, assist him, by conforming to the advice of her friends.

The few last words made her draw up again.

“I cannot think, sir,” said she, “what
 “ you mean by upbraiding me with not
 “ taking the advice of my friends; none
 “ of them ever offered to give me any,
 “ till it was too late, and you have,
 “ yourself, been particularly wanting in
 “ that respect, as you must have known
 that

"that Mr. Delwyn was married before
"I saw him."

"Married!" exclaimed Rivers; "By
"all that's sacred, I never knew that he
"was married: but, surely he cannot
"have acted so villanous a part: he
"might have been married without *my*
"knowledge, but certainly his wife was
"dead before he made his addressees to
"you."

"No, no," replied she, bursting in-
to a flood of tears; "she is alive now:
"she was in Ireland when he married
"me."

Rivers looked, as he really felt, amaz-
ed at this intelligence which he had not in
the least expected, and made haste to
exculpate himself, as he was, indeed,
perfectly ignorant of the prior mar-
riage, and, repeatedly assured her, that
he had never entertained the slightest
suspicion

suspicion of it. He then asked her how she came to be certain of Delwyn's former marriage?

"On my arrival in town, replied she, to order a few trifles at the milliner's, a lady came in, and bespoke a great many things. When the mistress of the shop desired the favour of her name, she answered, Delwyn; upon which she smiled at me, imagining that this Mrs. Delwyn might be one of my husband's relations. I was, indeed, inclined to be of that opinion; and asked her if she was related to Mr. Delwyn of Ireland.

"I was married to a Mr. Delwyn in Ireland, madam, replied she, who has been in England these nine months, about some particular business.

"Perhaps, said I, he is related to my Mr. Delwyn; quite forgetting, at that

“that time, that he had insisted upon
“my keeping our marriage secret, and
“glad to meet with any person belong-
“ing to his family who appeared so
“genteel.

“It may be so, madam, answered
“she.—Here is Mr. Delwyn’s picture,
“continued she, very politely taking a
“miniature out of her pocket; you will
“soon know if he is related to *you*, for
“it is reckoned a striking likeness.

“Imagine my astonishment at seeing
“the exact resemblance of the man whom
“I sincerely believed to be my husband.

“I screamed; I was very near faint-
“ing.

“The milliner, and Mrs. Delwyn—
“for you will find I have no right to
“that name, continued she, bursting
“into a fresh flood of tears—begged
“me

“ me to acquaint them with the cause of
“ my sudden disorder.

“ I replied, that the strong likeness
“ in that picture to *my* Mr. Delwyn,
“ had alarmed me excessively, as I was
“ afraid that we had both been married
“ to the same man.

“ Heaven forbid ! cried the Lady.
“ The milliner, beginning to apprehend
“ that there was something wrong, I
“ suppose, said, Perhaps the gentlemen
“ are brothers, and then the resemblance
“ between them may be accounted for.”

“ Mr. Delwyn has no brother, replied
“ the Lady, very seriously, and then—
“ as if recollecting herself—but as you
“ say, Mrs. Chambers, added she, to
“ the Milliner, they may be related.
“ Pray madam, continued she, turning
“ to *me*, where do you live?

“ I told

“ I told her that I had not been long
“ in London, and that I had lodgings at
“ C——, adding, that Mr. Delwyn was
“ in the country.

“ She looked hard at me, while I
“ spoke those words, and hurried out of
“ the shop.

“ I went home, and thought no more
“ of the unexpected interview.

“ In about a week Mr. Delwyn came
“ to C——. I was vastly glad to see
“ him, and ran to tell him so.

“ He received me with the greatest
“ indifference; stopped me short, and
“ asked me, why I had discovered our
“ marriage, and in a publick shop too,
“ as he had told me how absolutely ne-
“ cessary it was to keep it private?

“ I fell a crying, and said, that I
“ was sorry I had vexed him; adding,
“ that as he had kept me up so long
“ from

“ from every body, I was glad to meet
“ with some of his family to make a
“ friendship with.

“ Ay, replied he, but such a friend-
“ is by no means proper : you have un-
“ done both yourself and me by your
“ indiscreet behaviour : my father will
“ now hear of our marriage, and either
“ oblige me to leave you, or disinherit
“ me ; you must, therefore, keep your-
“ self still private, or I shall be forced
“ to give you up.

“ The conclusion of this speech irritated
“ me, I confess, extremely : and I replied
“ in a manner which plainly shewed how
“ much fretted I was to lead a solitary life
“ without a single friend to speak to.

“ He grew angry at my sharp answer,
“ and told me, that if I loved him as I
“ ought, I should have complied with
“ his inclinations in every thing.

“ I re-

"I replied, that if *he* loved *me*, he
 "would not wish to have me live in so
 "melancholy a manner; adding, that
 "I supposed he had his reasons; for I
 "believed that he had married the wo-
 "man whom I had seen at the mil-
 "liner's.

"He made no answer—but, soon af-
 "terwards, left the room.

"When I had expected him to come
 "in again, for some time, to no pur-
 "pose, I called the maid, and asked her
 "where her master was?

"Gone to London, madam, said she;
 "did not you know it?

"I was prodigiously shocked at this
 "information; at his leaving me again
 "in so mortifying a manner: I knew
 "not what course to take. I was not,
 "however, long in suspense.—The very
 "next day he came, and brought the

"Lady

“ Lady whom I had met with at Mrs.
“ Chambers’s. He told me that he had
“ been married some time to her, that he
“ was sorry he had deceived me, but that
“ I very well knew I would not be sa-
“ tisfied till he went through the same
“ ceremony with *me*—adding, that his
“ wife had been so good as to forgive
“ him, on his promising to break off his
“ connection with me entirely, and to
“ return with her to Ireland. He con-
“ cluded, with saying, I have brought
“ her to attest the truth of what I have
“ related.

“ She then, at his request, produced
“ the certificate of her marriage. The
“ sight of it shocked me so much that
“ I was hardly capable of reading it.

“ When I had read it, they left me to
“ the care of my maid.

“ I scarce

"I scarce knew how I passed that night: my maid told me that I was like a distracted woman.—I had nobody to send to you and your family; the only friends I had in town had left it. I knew not what to do."

"There was but one step to be taken," said Rivers, interrupting her. "You should have returned to your father—Who could be so proper to shield you from farther impositions?"

Lucy blushed, and hung her head, conscious of not feeling the least desire to bury herself a second time in Derbyshire. Then, lifting up her eyes, as if ashamed both of her past conduct, and of what she was going to say, told him she was too much distressed at that time to determine what to do; that having nobody near her to advise her, she thought it best to remain where she was till

till he and the ladies came to town; that being excessively melancholy, the mistress of the house where she lodged at C—— had desired her to come and drink tea with her sometimes.—“Having some friends,” continued she, “to visit her, one day, who were going to the play, Mrs. Bennet and they persuaded me to accompany them; and I *did*, tho’ much against my inclination. A gentleman there, took a great deal of notice of me, a man of fashion and fortune, whom I remembered to have seen at Mrs. Rivers’s before she was married. He claimed an acquaintance with me, and desired leave to visit me. I then left C—— and took these lodgings, thinking them more creditable, and also more convenient than the apartments I before occupied at a distance from town.”

Here

Here she stopped, looked down again, and waited to hear what Rivers would say to her proceedings. He immediately told her that he was exceedingly sorry to find that Delwyn, of whose affairs he was entirely ignorant, had so grossly deceived her.—“His behaviour, however,” added he, “should make you doubly cautious about placing a confidence in any other man. You have nothing to do, I think, but to return to the cottage where your father, tho’ he has reason to be offended with you, will receive you with the greatest consideration; he will pity the errors into which you have fallen, drawn into them by inexperience, and he will protect you from future dangers.”

Lucy heard this salutary advice with the utmost dissatisfaction; but as she intended not to follow it, she made no re-

ply. Rivers looked upon her silence, as a determination not to pay any regard to it: he, therefore, thought it best to urge it still more home: He told her, that she would act very indiscreetly, and bring herself, probably, into fresh inconveniencies, if she continued in lodgings by herself, as her continuance in them, must be attended with a total loss of reputation, if with no worse consequences.

“In answer to these apprehensions,” replied she, with a spirit which he did not imagine she could have assumed in such circumstances, “my character is already gone, but if my new friend can overlook *that*, he has it in his power entirely to restore it.”

Rivers told her that such favourable turns seldom happened.—“If the person, you mean,” continued he, “is the same I imagine him to be, you cannot,
“not,

“not, reasonably, expect any honourable
“alliance with *him*, supposing him to
“make no objection to your affair with
“Delwyn, as I am intimately acquaint-
“ed with Sir George Medway, and
“know that he is extremely attached to
“Miss Ashly, who, tho’ she has not ab-
“solutely accepted of him, has not to-
“tally rejected him.”

“Miss Ashly,” cried Lucy, reddening with jealousy, envy, and vexation,
“I know nothing of any engagement he
“has with *her*; or with any other wo-
“man.”

“I believe you,” answered Rivers;
“but as *I* do, I wish you would so far
“credit what I tell you as to relinquish
“your expectations from him; for you
“may be assured that Sir George Med-
“way will never marry a woman who
“has been so unfortunately deceived:

“and I hope you are too well convinced
“of the folly of listening to him upon
“any other terms.”

Lucy now became as red as scarlet. She made no answer for some time. At last, however, affecting to be convinced, she put on a forced civility, thanked him for his friendship, and said she would shew him she deserved it by following his advice.

Rivers, pleased with her apparent conversion, for the sake of her father, and sister, as much as for her own, offered her his assistance. She thanked him for his offer with a smile, and told him she did not want his assistance at present. “When I do,” added she, “I will take
“the liberty to send to you.”

Rivers then perceiving that she appeared to wish for his absence, took his leave, and went again to Medway's.

He

He found him at home.

Sir George discovered great pleasure at the sight of him.—“I am just going to dress to wait on Miss Ashly,” said he.

“Are you?” replied Rivers. “I fancy you will meet with a cold reception, as Louisa has heard that you keep a girl in the next street.”

“Who, I?” answered Sir George, looking a little disconcerted; “She must certainly have been misinformed: I keep no girl, I assure you.”

“Pray who was that lady with you at the opera last night?”

“Oh—Why that is a widow,” replied he, as if recollecting himself, “whom I saw once with Mrs. Rivers, before you were married; she is a good pretty woman.—Happening to be in the same box we chatted together a little, that’s

"all.—With me?—No, no,—she was
 "not with *me*, and so you may tell Miss
 "Ashly."

"You may tell her yourself, if you
 "please," said Rivers, "for I do not
 "chuse to have any thing to do between
 "you."

"Nay, my dear Ned, but I hope you
 "will do so much, by way of friendship
 "to us both, as to restore me to her
 "good opinion, if I have been so unfor-
 "tunate as to lose it."

"I will not promise, Medway," said
 Rivers, "till I know upon what footing
 "you really are with Mrs. Delwyn,
 "who indeed expects you to marry her."

"To marry her? To marry her?" re-
 plied Sir George; repeating those words;
 "Then she must be mad, stark-mad:
 "How can the woman expect any such
 "thing? A woman with whom I am so
 "slightly

"slightly acquainted, and who, tho'
"pretty and conversible, has seen no-
"thing of life; neither has she birth or
"fortune to introduce her into the
"world: Surely, Rivers, you cannot
"suppose me capable, setting aside my
"strong attachment to Miss Ashly, of
"throwing myself away in such a man-
"ner?"

"Why then," said Rivers, "if you
"really have no honourable designs in
"your visits to Mrs. Delwyn, it is cruel
"to continue them, to give her false
"hopes to endanger her character."

"To say truth," answered Sir George,
"I do not think she will suffer more
"from the loss of reputation than she
"has done already."

"If you think so, you had better ne-
"ver go near her again; you cannot,

"indeed, consistently with your pretensions to Louisa."

Sir George looked embarrassed, but replied,—“If Miss Ashly has shewn any disapprobation of my behaviour to Mrs. Delwyn, I am very ready to make every kind of atonement for it which may be agreeable to her.—I will wait on her to clear myself from any false accusations which may have been framed against me.”

Rivers then wanting to be at home before him, and to inform Louisa of all that he had done, left him to finish his dress.

When he had told the ladies all that had passed between him and Sir George, they both thought that Miss Peyton—for she had no right to any other name—was really kept by the latter, and lamented

mented the poor girl's unhappy infatuation.

Mrs. Rivers said, she would send for her, and try to persuade her to go down to her father.

"Let us first endeavour," replied Rivers, "to break this unfortunate affair to him in the gentlest manner."

Accordingly, Cropley, as a man remarkable for the natural mildness, and amiableness of his temper, and as a clergyman, was deemed by them all as a very proper person, the only proper person, indeed, they could then think of, to negotiate so delicate an affair.

To *him*, therefore, Rivers sat down again to write.—After having acquainted him with the immediate cause of his taking up his pen, he gave him all the consolation in his power, by assuring him that he did not believe Louisa would ad-

mit of Sir George Medway's visits, after so glaring a proof of the levity of his conduct.

While he was thus employed, Sir George made his appearance before Louisa.

She received him in the properest manner imaginable, neither with any marks of anger, nor with any signs of concern for his dishonourable proceedings, but with a calm indifference, a cold contempt, which sufficiently discovered that she was glad that he had enabled her to see his disposition so early that she might have the most reasonable excuse in the world to get rid of him.

As to *him*, he was all submission.— He declared, with great earnestness, that he was exceedingly concerned to find the accidental meeting with a lady at the opera, whom he had seen at Mrs. Rivers's,

Rivers's, to whom he could not avoid speaking without being absolutely rude, should have subjected him to so mortifying a reception; a reception which he had not, in any shape, deserved.—“But every man has enemies, Madam,” continued he, “especially the man who hopes to be honoured with your regard; *he* must be particularly envied by so many people, that it is no wonder there should be vigorous attempts made to prejudice you against him.”

Louisa interrupted him in the middle of his defence, by desiring him to give himself no sort of trouble to vindicate his conduct to *her*.—“If you have been guilty of any improprieties, Sir,” added she, “you are to answer for them; I have nothing to do with them. I am exceeding sorry, indeed, for the young person who has been so imprudent as

“to swerve from her duty to herself,
“and her family, by listening to the in-
“fluencing language of people who
“cruelly gratified their own inclination
“at the expence of *her* peace. All the
“amends you can now make her, or her
“friends, is not to see her any more, and
“to leave *them* to convince her of the
“fatal errors she has committed, and to
“take her out of her present dangerous
“situation.”

Sir George entirely subscribed to her sentiments, and declared that he thought they were extremely just. “As to myself, Madam,” continued he, “I had
“no idea of the young lady’s having
“been in the least indiscreet.—Having
“seen her at Mrs. Rivers’s, I concluded
“that she was a very proper person to
“speak to in public.”

Louisa,

Louisa, finding herself obliged in a manner to talk upon the subject, tho' she would rather have declined it, was determined to let him know that she was acquainted with every thing relating to the affair, and, therefore, told him that he had also thought Mrs. Delwyn a very proper person to visit in *private*, as well as to appear with in *public*.—

“Your visits to Mrs. Delwyn, Sir,” added she, “may be of no consequence to you, but they will be very disadvantageous to *her*, who from her ignorance of the world is flattered with the attentions of a man of your figure, little knowing how little appearances are to be depended upon. In how scandalous a light does that man appear who, with all his pretensions to honour, goes about to seduce innocent, inexperienced women, who from
“their

“their youth, vanity, and love of pleasure, are but too easily prevailed on to deviate from that propriety of behaviour, which can only secure their virtue, their reputation, and their peace.”

Sir George looked rather foolish while his conduct was thus smartly condemned: but he became, at last, rather offended, especially when he found that all his apologies, all his submissions were ineffectual.—“You are uncommonly severe against me, Madam,” said he; “I believe I have as few mistakes of the kind you have hinted at pretty strongly, to rectify, as any man; but since you are so extremely concerned for the lady in question, and think that I have had a considerable share in her seduction — A crime with which, I confess, I am very little acquainted—

“I will

"I will immediately make her a gentle settlement, and promise never to see her again. You will *now*, I hope, Madam, think of restoring me to your favour, the loss of which, will give me unspeakable disquiet."

"Indeed but I cannot," answered she—"In the first place, I think a settlement no recompense at all for the greatest injury a man can do a woman; in the second, I never will accept of a man, who has, or who ever has had, any illegal connections."

"You are too austere, indeed, Madam," said Sir George—"There are few, if any, men who have not had temporary attachments of this kind; and if a man consents to quit a woman with whom he has lived in—what is called—a dishonourable way, and makes a handsome provision for her, he

“he certainly makes an atonement for
“his conduct.”

“The man who has been guilty of
“*one* folly of this kind,” replied she,
“is liable to be guilty of many more,
“and no woman ought to accept of any
“thing from the man who has preju-
“diced her, or would prejudice her, in
“his own opinion, or in that of the
“world.”

“Is there then, Madam, according to
“your way of thinking, no amends to
“be made to the lady for what you
“deem so great an injury? and is not
“the setting her above temptation by
“an annuity for life some sort of repa-
“ration?”

“None, Sir; as it renders her totally
“independant on those friends, who
“alone might be able to influence her
“against any farther improprieties in
“her

“her conduct. The woman who accepts of an annuity from the man who has wronged her, discovers so little delicacy, that I have often wondered there could possibly be so many women capable of degrading themselves, still lower, by the acceptance of a pecuniary assistance from the man whom they have the greatest reason to despise.”

“How must they live,” said he, “without them?”

“Let them return to their friends,” replied she; “if *they* will not receive them, let them go into some way of business, let them go to service, let them do any thing to get an honest livelihood, any thing rather than receive favours from their declared enemy.”

“Upon

"Upon my soul, Madam," answered Sir George, "you are more inveterate against the little foibles of our sex than any lady I ever heard before."

"Were all ladies so, Sir, we should hear of fewer foibles, as you are pleased to call them, among *you*: but till that day comes, I cannot think of continuing my acquaintance with you!"—

Sir George, very much chagrined at her strange obstinacy, made use of every argument he could think of to prevail on her to forgive him, and to admit him into her favour; but all to no purpose: she would not hear his vindication of himself. Finding, therefore, all his efforts ineffectual, he, at last, left her—

He

THE STORM.

91

He left her, and went to Rivers, to let *him* know what he had done—They agreed to send Lucy down to her father, as soon as they received an answer from Cropley.

Mrs. Rivers, in the mean time, sent for Lucy, and strove to make her sensible of her second indiscretion, infinitely greater than the first: but Lucy had learnt her lesson: she appeared sorry for what was past, and promised to be very prudent for the future; though she had not the least intention to do as she said.

Sir George, tho' dismissed by Louisa, was by no means willing to take her at her word. He fully believed, indeed, that she would think better of what she had told him: he, therefore, called upon Lucy, whom he had, as she justly said, met at the play, where *she*, however, and not *he* began the acquaintance, by inform-

informing him, that she fancied she had seen him at Mrs. Banks's. In that conversation, she conducted herself with so much address, that she induced the baronet to visit her at her lodgings at C——. As a mutual inclination soon took place, he found it convenient to go out of town, and as she longed earnestly to live in London, she was easily prevailed on to remove into genteel apartments.

In those apartments Rivers found her, in those apartments Sir George supported her in great affluence, but he never entertained the smallest design of marrying her, though she had, at the commencement of their acquaintance, hoped to persuade *him* to a marriage, as she had persuaded Delwyn, whose name she adopted. She had told Sir George that she was a widow, and that Mr. Delwyn died

died abroad. Sir George, however, was too knowing a one to give credit to such a tale; yet he liked her person, and as she affected to be violently fond of him, he thought she would serve to amuse him in his idle hours; at least, till his marriage with Miss Ashly was compleated. But when he found *that* lady so very much offended at his proceedings, in her absence, he went to tell Miss Peyton that as he was going to be married, he must, necessarily, put an end to the connection between them.

Lucy was mortified, to the last degree, at this intelligence. She was in some measure prepared for it by Mrs. Rivers, (who informed her, when she sent for her, that Sir George Medway was honourably engaged to a lady of her acquaintance, and that had he been entirely disengaged, he never would marry her.)

her,) but she pretended to be extremely shocked at it. She fell into fits, and declared that she should be quite unhappy if he deserted her, as her husband had taken no care of her, and as her tenderness for Sir George was too great to bear a separation from him.

Sir George, though he knew too much of the world to believe every thing which a pretty woman said to him, was neither ill-natured, nor destitute of sensibility; and there was something in her *apparent* distress, that made him feel rather uneasy at having occasioned it. He allowed Louisa in his own mind, all the merit to which she was, he thought, entitled, and subscribed to the justness of her sentiments with regard to the indelicacy of an annuity: yet he knew, also, that there was a wide difference in the opinions of women, and that though
some

some few were capable of subsisting in almost any situation, with the men to whom they are affectionately attached, the majority were better satisfied with an independant state, and with the liberty of living in the way most agreeable to them. He, therefore, made her, at once, the offer of a hundred a year for her life, and presented her with fifty guineas immediately to answer the emergencies of the moment.

Sir George soon saw that he had been mistaken in his woman; for though she would have been glad of double the sum he offered to her, she was not, at that time, sufficiently acquainted with the art of those females in her own class, to know how to drive a hard bargain. Besides, it was now too late: had she insisted upon terms before their intimacy began, she might, possibly, have made a
good

good deal more of him: but she could not recal the past time.—As she set out, indeed, with the hopes of decoying him into matrimony, it was her business to appear, at first, quite the woman of virtue, it was her business, by yielding gradually, and with seeming reluctance to his wishes, to let him see that she was ignorant of every art but that of pleasing *him*. Such a mode of behaviour is frequently successful, and many young fellows are taken in by it; Sir George was too experienced a man to fall into the snare spread for him, though he was too polite to let her see that her address was insufficient, and indeed took an advantage of her affected attachment to him. Lucy certainly thought Sir George a very agreeable man, but his rank and his fortune were, as certainly, his principal charms in *her* eyes. Lucy had not yet felt

felt the tender passion to the extent she was capable of feeling it; she was weary of her retired life with her father and sister; and, as she loved dress, and all kinds of dissipation, she was the more easily tempted to take her first false step; and, as she now dreaded a return to that retirement which was so disgusting to her, with the additional vexation of knowing that she had rendered herself an object of contempt to those who, before, professed an affection for her, she was the more eager to accept of the settlement which Sir George had offered her.

As soon as she recovered a little, Sir George left her, in order to get the settlement executed with all possible expedition.

Rivers now received an answer from Cropley, in which he told him that

there was no describing the good old man's affliction, who was determined to set out for London, though not at all able to undertake such a journey, in the state of mind he was in, to fetch his daughter Lucy home.

This intelligence Mrs. Rivers conveyed to Lucy, for whom she sent a second time, and endeavoured to make her thoroughly convinced of her father's extreme tenderness, and indulgence; assuring her, that if she would but live a regular life for the future, all past follies would be forgotten and forgiven.

Lucy heard Mrs. Rivers with a respectful attention, but resolved to act agreeably to her own inclination.

Soon after she returned home, Sir George called upon her with the settlement, gave her fifty guineas, and bade her adieu.

She

She whimpered a little at parting, to keep up the farce.

When he was gone, she was determined to look out for another lover.

Sir George then waited again on Miss Ashly, again confessed his sorrow for his past follies, and gave her the strongest assurances of his future amendment, in consequence of a sincere abhorrence of them; adding, that he had taken leave of Mrs. Delwyn for ever, and that he had attempted to make her some reparation for his connection with her, by settling an annuity of a hundred a year upon her.

Louisa coolly replied, she was sorry for it.

“How Madam?—Can you really be
 “serious? Is it possible you can think
 “that a provision for this young person
 “sufficient to prevent her from falling
 F 2 “into

“into any farther temptations, will be
“injurious to her?”

“I have declared my sentiments already upon this subject, Sir George,” replied she, “and have nothing more to say about it.”

Finding that he could not induce her to change her opinion, he took leave of her, and applied to Rivers, intreating him to make use of all his influence to prevail on her to pardon what he had done particularly to be condemned by her.

Rivers told him, that he was sure it would be to no purpose.—“The only way to win her, if she is to be won,” added he, “will be, to let her quite alone.”

In a few days after the receipt of Cropley’s letter, Mr. Peyton and Nancy arrived in Berkeley Square, in compliance with the very earnest and pressing
invi-

invitation they had received from both Mr. and Mrs. Rivers to make their house their home.

Nancy was exceedingly loth to leave the country, she begged to remain at the Cottage; but her father, whose fondness increased for her, as he had been deprived of her sister, told her, that she was the only comfort of his declining years, and that he could never bear to be separated from her.

Mr. and Mrs. Rivers received them in the most friendly manner, and both said and did every thing to make their residence with them agreeable.

Rivers, indeed, particularly addressed himself to the good old man, while the ladies caressed his daughter, who behaved with the greatest propriety to the man whom she could not see without much agitation, though it cost her a

great deal to be continually upon her guard.

As to poor Peyton, he wept aloud to think of his Lucy's indiscretions, and would have gone to see her on the very night of his arrival, had not Rivers persuaded him to stay where he was, telling him that he would be better able to endure the shock of a first interview when he was more composed.

They then enquired after Cropley.

"He is a good young man," said Peyton; "too good for this world, and will not be long in it, I believe, for he is in a deep decline."

Louisa's face and neck were like crimson at this information.

Rivers told Mr. Peyton, that he hoped his concern for his young friend, had made him imagine him to be worse than he really was.

Peyton

Peyton shook his head—"I sincerely
 "wish," said he, "that I may be mis-
 "taken, for I have a most affectionate
 "regard for him."

Louisa sat silent the rest of the even-
 ing, though she had before exerted the
 greatest vivacity to welcome her friends
 to London.

The next morning Peyton took a
 hackney coach, refusing to make use of
 Rivers's carriage, and went to Lucy's
 lodgings.

To his no small surprise, they told
 him that she was gone from *them*, and
 that they knew nothing of her, as she
 had left no directions with them where
 she was to be found.

The poor old man was exceedingly
 distressed at this new affliction, and it
 was with much difficulty he could sup-
 port himself till he got back again to

Berkley Square, as he was quite alone, having positively refused to let Nancy accompany him, nor was it in *her* power, or in the power of his friends to administer consolation to him.

"I am quite undone," said he; "no-
"thing can restore my daughter to me."

In vain did Mr. and Mrs. Rivers avail themselves of every argument they could think of to console him: by no attempt to amuse him, could they draw him from his melancholy reflections; nothing seemed to have any effect upon him, till they told him that he would not only injure his own health, but endanger that of his daughter Nancy, who was really almost overpowered by the variety of sensations she underwent in her present situation, occasioned by her concern for her sister, and her affliction for her father. To see the man whom she had ever loved, who
was

was too amiable to be hated, to be even disliked, spend every hour in shewing his tenderness, in a thousand different shapes, for a wife who quite adored him, was indeed extremely painful to her, but on the other hand, she was flattered by his affectionate attentions to her; attentions which were, however, very consistent with his attachment to Mrs. Rivers. In short, she was so violently agitated by these conflicting emotions, that she frequently wished herself back again in her retreat. Nor was Peyton at all satisfied with any thing, but the esteem and consideration which Mr. and Mrs. Rivers, and Miss Ashly discovered for him. The bad conduct of Lucy gave him perpetual uneasiness, and he was continually in search of her, without being able to hear any satisfactory intelligence: continually expect-

ing to hear of her being plunged deeper and deeper in vanity and vice.

Wearied with his fruitless enquiries, the unhappy old man resolved, at last, to return to the cottage which he had left with regret.

Before his departure, when he was talking over his former life, with those who had behaved in so friendly a manner to him, and who had, therefore, a right, he thought, to be acquainted with his history, he informed them that he had been bred a merchant, and settled in business with a partner with a fair character, but who soon afterwards became intimate with one of those expensive creatures, who prey upon men of affluent fortunes and easy dispositions. "To this woman" continued he, "my partner sacrificed every thing, and, at length, his life, having first
" drawn

“ drawn *me* in for a much larger sum
 “ than I could pay.—In consequence of
 “ this unexpected blow, I became dis-
 “ gusted at the world, especially at the
 “ trading part of it.—I had, indeed, no
 “ capital to enable me to go into bu-
 “ siness again, but my credit was suffi-
 “ cient for that purpose: however, as
 “ I had been once deceived, I was a-
 “ fraid to venture a second time, parti-
 “ cularly with the money of other peo-
 “ ple, feeling I could more easily bear
 “ the loss of my own money, than that
 “ of my friends. I, therefore, satisfied
 “ all my creditors; and, with the little
 “ I had left, purchased the retreat where
 “ *you* found me—(addressing himself to
 “ Rivers) and where I have lived with
 “ only my two children, above these
 “ six years. My wife died soon after I
 “ was a bankrupt; and *her* death render-

“ed me more desirous of shutting my-
“self up, as I was extravagantly fond
“of her, and imputed her death to the
“unlooked for, and disagreeable turn
“in my affairs. In my retirement I had
“no relish for any thing but the care
“of my daughters, to whom I transfer-
“ed all my affection ; and, till the
“elopement of Lucy, I had a very high
“opinion of them, having taken a great
“deal of pains to make them deserv-
“ing of the tenderness I felt for them.
“I suffered the more acutely for Lu-
“cy’s ill conduct, as I never believed
“her capable of acting in so imprudent
“a manner. Before *she* deserted me, I
“thought I could have gladly parted
“with them both to men likely to be
“good husbands, though at a distance
“from me ; but the elopement of Lucy
“has made me so exceedingly fond of
“Nancy,

"Nancy, that I can hardly bear her out
"of my fight."

Peyton had insisted upon Nancy's not going with him to see her sister, thinking that the first meeting between himself and her, should be without a third person; particularly *such* a third person: But when his search after her was unsuccessful, he desired to return home, tho' Mr. and Mrs. Rivers wished to prevail on him to stay longer in London.

Nancy was exceedingly glad to be out of the way of a man whom she could not but admire, whom she thought it criminal to love.

Mr. and Mrs. Rivers, sent a number of friendly compliments to Cropley.

Louisa wanted to say something remarkably civil to the amiable curate; but being unwilling to say too little, and afraid to say too much, she was silent.

Rivers,

Rivers, now become fond of the country, told Peyton they would soon follow him: and by so doing gave a kind of satisfaction to Louisa which she had not been accustomed to feel, tho' she was disposed to receive pleasure from most of the proceedings of her friends.

Sir George Medway, finding that nothing he could say or do had any sort of effect towards reinstating himself into Miss Ashly's favour, left off visiting at Rivers's house, tho' he kept up his acquaintance with him at other places.

Rivers, recollecting that Sir George might know where Lucy was, as he allowed her an annuity, asked him if he knew any thing of her.

He replied in the negative.

Rivers then asked him, if he believed that the person who was ordered by him

to

to pay her the money, could give any information about her.

"I fancy not," answered Sir George. "I had the curiosity to enquire once after the place which she had pitched upon for the receipt of her allowance, and was informed that she had forbidden the sending of it to any place, saying that she would call for it herself."

Lucy was indeed at that time out of the knowledge, and of course out of the reach of her friends and benefactors.— Having heard Southampton mentioned to her in very favourable terms, she imagined she might stand a chance to get new lovers in a new place. She, therefore, set out for Hampshire with a new servant, and took the name of Grigsby, the first which came into her head.

Soon after her arrival at Southampton, she was distinguished by a young officer, who

who was quartered not many miles off, and who was one of the handsomest, but one of the most thoughtless fellows in the world.

This handsome, thoughtless fellow was the first man who made Lucy sensible that she had a heart. She endeavoured, immediately, to draw him in to marry her, and began to play over the same airs which she had practised before Delwyn, and Sir George; but captain Turton soon convinced her that he was not to be caught by *them*; he soon prevailed on her to live with him in his own way.—In a very short time he found her settlement, small as it was, quite convenient, tho' by no means sufficient to satisfy his wants.

Mr. and Mrs. Rivers, before their departure for Derbyshire, made all possible enquiries after Lucy in hopes of hearing

hearing some intelligence relating to her; in hopes also of being able to carry her down to her father. It was with great concern they were obliged to leave London without having it in their power to give him any information with regard to her.

They made an early visit to Mr. Peyton, and they found him, as they expected him to be, very melancholy on Lucy's account.

Cropley, who had heard of their intentions to come down, and who had waited impatiently for their arrival, hastened to the cottage soon after their appearance at it, but his precipitation, occasioned by his eagerness to see Louisa, and his emotions which he felt at the thoughts of seeing her, deprived him entirely of breath; he could not speak at first; he was much thinner than he was
when

when they left him, and had a faint colour in his cheeks, the certain sign of a hectic: Joy, however, sparkled in his eyes at the sight of Louisa who spoke to him with the greatest good humour, and with some compassion at the alteration in his health.

He told her that the joy which her appearance gave him, made him forget his disorder.

When they were alone, he said to her—"You are returned unmarried, " and that is a transport beyond expression; and yet I check myself sometimes for indulging my raptures upon the occasion; as I am afraid I discover too much ill nature by feeling them, " your being deprived of the greatest blessing which this life affords, the " being made happy by an amiable " man."

" If

"If I am happy without that blessing," replied she, smiling, "it is sufficient."

"You think so because you are ignorant of the exquisite delight which you would experience from a mutual passion."

"I wonder, Mr. Cropley," said she, "that you should be so warm an advocate for love who, if we may believe you, suffer so much from it."

"I suffer, Madam, because my passion is unsuccessful; were I of a rank in life to pretend to the object of my wishes, I might be happy in using my fondest endeavours to make *her* so."

The few last words were accompanied with a deep sigh.

Louisa returned no answer: She could not bring herself to consent to his wishes, and

and yet she could not bear to see him so wretched on her account.

"If this Cropley now was not a poor
"curate," said she, one day to Mrs. Rivers, "I might venture to encourage him
"to hope."

"Shall I give him a living for you,
"child," replied Mrs. Rivers, smiling.

"Not for the world on *my* account,"
said Louisa, "lest I should change my
"mind, and marry him: People would
"then say I was proud, and *he* would
"imagine that love had no share in my
"consent. No, if I do not give him my
"hand while he is poor, I will never be
"married to him when he is rich."

Mrs. Rivers laughed at her lively young friend, who, tho' she affected to conceal her sensations by the force of her vivacity, was more hurt by the change
in

in Cropley's person than she thought she should have been.

The Rivers's, indeed, were, both, concerned for the worthy curate, and desired him to be as much at the manor as he could, hoping that the company he would meet with there, and the society of Louisa might be of service to him.

Louisa actually exerted herself so much to give him pleasure that he began to grow rather better.

Rivers presented him with a horse, that he might not only be benefited by the exercise, but be able to come and see them oftener without being too much fatigued.

Miss Ashly, tho' she took no notice to Rivers of what he had done, was very much pleased with him for the regard which he shewed Cropley, who rose every day in her esteem; and her partiality

tiality for him was discoverable by a thousand little inadvertencies which nobody, she thought, observed; inadvertencies which her friends never mentioned to her, because they did not wish her to put a stop to them. They were not thrown away upon Cropley.—He felt an inconceivable pleasure at the consideration she discovered for him; his spirits revived, his mind became more at ease.—His restored tranquility, added to his exercise, for he rode every day to the manor, soon made a total alteration in his looks.—The glow of health again crimsoned his cheeks.

Louisa, pleased with the consequences with which her animating behaviour to him had been attended, continued to treat him in the same flattering manner. She was of opinion, indeed, that it was really incumbent on her so to treat him,

as

as she had sufficient reason to believe that his life was in her power. However, Cropley, tho' he could not, with any propriety, complain of her neglect, could not at the same time, flatter himself that she would consent to be united to him. He was afraid to ask the *interesting* question, because he was almost certain of being frozen by a refusal. He, therefore, strove to make himself contented with the regard she paid him, which, by imperceptibly increasing, filled him with transports he could scarce conceal. He felt them strongly, but he dreaded the indulgence of them, lest the discovery of them should prompt her to alter her behaviour to him; and as he concluded that he could never expect any greater favour from her, he endeavoured to be satisfied with those which he received.

In

In the height of this kind of intimacy between Cropley and Miss Ashly, a young man of fashion, who was just come down to take possession of a neighbouring estate, spent a day with Rivers.

This young man of fashion was prodigiously taken with Louisa, and as he was lively, and agreeable, she was induced to enter into a more free conversation with him than she had with any other man for a considerable time.

Cropley happened to dine at the manor that day also. He sat at table, but he ate nothing. His whole attention was taken up with the new object which appeared so attractive in Louisa's eyes. He drew conclusions extremely unfavourable to himself, from the behaviour of the young nobleman, who young, handsome, and accomplished, with rank
and

and riches, studied to recommend himself in the most delicate, and therefore, in the most powerful manner: a manner which could not but be pleasing to a woman of her taste and sensibility.—She was pleased, and she did not strive to hide the pleasure which she received, though she made no discoveries to induce any body to suppose that she intended to give his lordship any serious encouragement. *He*, however, made all possible advances towards a serious interview with her, and, by the insinuating elegance of his sentiments, lured her to reply in a way, by no means forbidding, though she had left herself room sufficient for the evasion of any answer which might not be agreeable to her.

Turning her eyes, accidentally, towards Cropley, she saw him in all the agonies of jealousy, yet, at the same

time, taking the greatest pains to curb them, to keep them, at least, from being perceived.

Lord N—— was too much engaged to see the agonies of his rival; but Louisa, feeling for the poor sufferer, though she knew that he was unnecessarily alarmed, had good nature enough to put a little restraint upon that vivacity which had made her appear rather more pleased with his lordship's attentions than she really was.

Unfortunately, however, for poor Cropley, Lord N—— would not give Louisa, a single opportunity to speak to him, he was, therefore, obliged to quit the manor before his lordship, and was hindered from returning to it, for two or three days, by the duties of his church.

During

During Cropley's absence from the manor, Lord N—— formed a kind of intimacy with Rivers, on purpose to have the pleasure of seeing and conversing with Miss Ashly.

He invited them to see his house, made a great entertainment, and proposed a riding party to them for the better viewing his grounds which were very extensive.

Mrs. Rivers, not being in a condition to venture on horseback, went in a low Italian chair with Rivers.

Miss Ashly, who made a very elegant appearance on horseback, rode, attended by my Lord.

In their way they were unavoidably obliged to pass through Cropley's village.

He was lingering home slowly, with folded arms, full of melancholy reflecti-

ons on the entire loss of Louisa, which he looked upon as certain: he was the more dejected, having been just performing the funeral service over the grave of an unhappy young man, who had, according to the language of his neighbours, died for love of his master's daughter, a wealthy farmer.

Cropley was wishing himself in the same place with his young parishioner, when the sudden noise made by the approaching lively train, for Lord N—— had some agreeable people at his house who accompanied the above-mentioned party, waked him from his reverie.

He started: the first objects he saw, were Miss Ashly, a most nymph-like figure, and Lord N—— riding close by her side, talking earnestly to her, and his hand actually rested upon her saddle.

Such

Such a sight was almost too much for the poor curate. He clasped his hands, fetched a deep sigh, and prepared to get out of the way of what pierced him to the soul.

Louisa, at that instant, reading every thing which passed in his tortured mind, held out her hand, and said — “Mr. Cropley—Mr. Cropley, where are you going? Won’t you speak to your friends?”

The sound of her silver voice, and the good-natured air with which she spoke, recalled him a little to himself.

Hastily advancing he seized the hand stretched out to him, tenderly pressed it in his own, which was as cold as clay, looked at her with eyes ready to start from his head, and sighed again, but could not utter a syllable.

Shocked at seeing him in so affecting a condition, for he was as pale as death, his knees knocked together, and he seemed hardly able to stand upright, she said, softly, to him, "What is the matter with you?" She then added, aloud, to Rivers, whose chair came up by that time—"I want to speak to Nancy Peyton, do you all go on, Mr. Cropley will take care of *me*, I shall soon overtake you."

The peculiarity of this behaviour now made my lord a little suspicious in his turn, but as he found both by her looks, and her manner of speaking, that she chose not to be taken notice of, he politely withdrew to the rest of the company, and left her to act as she pleased.

She, immediately, turned her horse towards the cottage. Cropley walked by her

her side, but presently perceived that in spite of all her endeavours to make her horse go slowly, the beast went too fast for him: for he wanted both strength and spirits.

"Hold my horse a moment," said she to him, "and I will get down."

Cropley offered to take her in his arms, but she threw herself with agility from her saddle, as she saw he was in a violent tremor. She then ordered her servant to lead her horse after them.

"What has put you into such a flutter of spirits?" said she to her agitated lover.

"The certainty of losing *you* for ever," replied he, with a faltering voice—"The loss of you, is now, I see, inevitable: but since it cannot be otherwise, let me rejoice that you have singled out a man who appears capable

"of making you happy.—I hope he will
"deserve your heart—if any man *can*
"deserve it."

"Thankee, Copley," said she; "but
"I am not going to put it in his power;
"nor can I imagine what reason you have
"to think so."

"I am naturally inclined to think so,
"Madam, because he is exceedingly en-
"amoured with you, and because he is
"more formed to *charm* than any man I
"have yet seen with you."

"And so your own favourable opi-
"nion of Lord N—— has put you into
"this violent fuss—Poor Copley," re-
plied she, with a good-natured smile—
"I will not say that you are extremely
"filly, because I believe you cannot help
"it, but I *must* say that you have very
"little confidence in me: have I not told
"you, more than once, that I am not
"going

THE STORM. 129

"going to be married, and that I have
"not found myself in the least inclined
"to change my situation?"

"You might not be so inclined, at the
"time you made those declarations, but
"you have since met with a man suffi-
"ciently amiable, perhaps, to make a
"total change in your sentiments."

"No; believe me, I am not of such
"a fickle disposition: I think Lord N—
"a genteel, well-bred, and even accom-
"plished young man, but I am not in
"love with him, nor do I imagine that
"I ever shall be in love with him."

"What a heart is yours, which no-
"thing can move!"

"Surely," replied she, smiling, "you
"do not wish me to love Lord N—?"

"I wish you to be happy," answered
he, with a dejected air. "I know I
"never *must*—perhaps I never *could* make

“you so; and I hope I am not so selfish as to desire you should remain ignorant of the transports of a reciprocal passion, because *I* must not share them with you.”

“That is handsomely said, Cropley,” replied she. “And yet if I am not mistaken in you, you would be little able to endure such an alteration in me.”

“I am but too sensible of it, Madam,” said he, very seriously: “I can but die, and I rather wish to be in my grave, than to have you meet with the slightest disappointment, than to have you endure the slightest uneasiness on *my* account.”

“And yet, Cropley, generous as your way of thinking is upon this occasion, I am afraid you will make me suffer not a few uneasy moments.”

He started, and looked surprised.

“Do

“Do you know now,” continued she,
“that it pains me to see you in this con-
“dition? You love me well enough to
“be unhappy—as it is not in my power to
“return your love—on my account; but
“in order to do every thing I can to re-
“move the disquiet which you feel, let
“me again assure you that I am not go-
“ing to be married; let me also promise
“you sincerely, that I will encourage no
“man to think I will accept of him, since
“I shall by so doing make *you* wretched.
“Recover your spirits, therefore, and
“try to regain your health; do not dis-
“trust me now, without reason; neither
“do you be jealous when you see me
“speak to any other man; because your
“jealousy will lessen you in my esteem.”

“Gracious G—d!” cried he, in a
transport of joy, while he pressed her
hand to his bosom; “Can you be so

“good, so very kind? Oh! Miss Ashly!
“this is more than my fondest hopes
“dared to aspire to: How shall I thank
“you?”

“By composing yourself,” said she,
“and by getting well.”

“It is impossible for me to be composed while I am thus elevated with delight,” replied he in rapturous accents.

They were now just at the cottage.

Nancy, by running out to meet them, prevented Louisa from saying any more to her lover: She thought indeed, immediately, that she had said a great deal too much, as she had, at that time, no intentions of being married to him: but the great concern which she felt, on the melancholy alteration in his appearance on her becoming acquainted with Lord N— made her sensible that she could not be happy if he was miserable.—

“And

"And yet it will be absolute madness
 "to marry him.—What must be done?"

With that soliloquy she entered the cottage, threw herself into the first chair near her, leaned her head upon her hand, and sat quite overwhelmed by the reflections which crowded into her mind.

Cropley gazed on her with tenderness and joy;—but his joy was mixed with uneasiness when he saw her look unusually serious.—He advanced to her; he was going to speak.

Nancy asked her if she was not well.

Cropley caught her hand, at the same moment.

"I shall be glad of a glass of water," said she.

Nancy ran to fetch it, while her lover, with an eager tenderness, intreated her to tell him what had disordered her.

"I am

“ I am sick of reflection, I think,” replied she ; “ but I shall be better presently.”

He was quite alarmed at her answer, and with the languid air which accompanied it. He fancied, indeed, that she was very ill, and so strongly opposed her remounting her horse that she consented, to please him, to send the servant directly to the manor, that the chariot might come for her. By gaining this point, he enjoyed her company till it was late in the evening. He then insisted upon going home with her ; she then told him that he must not think of returning that night.

During their ride home, he held her hand in his, and said a thousand impassioned things to her, for which she reproved him.

“ I did

"I did not tell you," said she, "I would *have you*, tho' I told you I would have nobody else."

"*That* transporting promise," replied he, "has made me wild with joy."

When she came home she told her friends that she had not been very well, and retired to her own apartment. She was kept awake all night by her thoughts about Cropley.

"Every body," said she to herself, "will call me mad woman to think of marrying this man: If he was a low, illiterate, ill-bred creature, I should be justly called so; but as he is young, handsome, and accomplished, as he has an excellent character, and is so strongly attached to me, as to be unable to live without me, can I make a better choice?"

She

She rose in the morning early, and sat with Mrs. Rivers some time before she was up, and then went into the garden.

There she saw Cropley who had not closed his eyes all night, walking hastily up and down, at a little distance. He looked pale, and unrefreshed, but flew to meet her, as soon as he perceived her.

After having enquired tenderly about her health, he told her that he had only waited to see her before his departure.

"Why are you in such a hurry?" said she, "stay and breakfast with us."

"I cannot," replied he, with a sigh: "even now while I stay, I retard, perhaps, the felicity of a worthy young couple who have long been wishing for the happy moment of their union which the father of the young man has hitherto prevented, as he is reckoned rich, compared with the girl, who has
" nothing

“ nothing but her person and her virtues
 “ to recommend her. With what cruel
 “ pangs does gold torture the human
 “ mind!”

Louisa threw down her eyes at her
 lover's apostrophe—but she raised them
 soon afterwards, and with a smile full of
 benignity, replied, “ Do not be so se-
 “ vere on fortune, since she has not only
 “ blessed *me*, but put it into my power
 “ to make the man happy whom I think
 “ worthy of my esteem: *you* are *that*
 “ man; and I have purchased the pre-
 “ sentation of the rectory of N— for
 “ you, the duties of which, no man will,
 “ I believe, perform with more proprie-
 “ ty than yourself.”

Cropley stood awhile embarrassed—
 He then replied—“ I am almost over-
 “ powered with joy, madam, to find
 “ myself the object of your esteem and
 “ gene-

“ generosity ; but the honour you have
“ done me, will be of no service to me—
“ *without* you. Even the little I possess,
“ is a great deal more than I can ever
“ enjoy, and, *with* you, it would be need-
“ less, as you have a sufficiency for
“ yourself : I should be more than rich,
“ in every thing, by possessing *you*. Let
“ me, therefore, madam, remain as I
“ am : blest with your esteem, I cannot
“ be absolutely miserable, though I shall
“ be always tempted to wish for more
“ of your favour, than I enjoy : and,
“ indeed, if I did not, I should not love
“ you as you ought to be loved.

“ Well,” answered she, “ you are, cer-
“ tainly, the first man who ever declined
“ the acceptance of such an offer : but
“ you render yourself, by declining it,
“ not only so uncommon, you render
“ yourself, at the same time, so valua-
“ ble

“ble a character, that I have a great
“mind to venture—and yet, Cropley,
“I declare I don’t know how to tell
“you that I will have you; but there is
“something so noble in your behaviour,
“that it has heightened my regard for
“you beyond expression.”

Here she stopped, and held out her hand to him: he caught it eagerly; but he could not, for some moments, articulate a syllable.

At last he cried—“Are you really in earnest, Miss Ashly?”

“Indeed, Cropley,” answered she, smiling, “I have gone too far to make a jest of it: but come,” added she, seeing him change colour, “let us talk no more upon this subject now; go in to breakfast, and then you shall set out to marry the young people, in whose happiness I interest myself extremely—

“You

"You will then, I hope, be more composed."

"I don't know whether I shall be ever capable of thanking you as I ought," said he; "my future conduct alone can do it: words are, at present, quite inadequate to my ideas, and to my feelings.—Your condescension—"

"Well, well—do not be too much elated neither," cried she, interrupting him; "for after all, I am not sure that I love you: pity and friendship are, I believe, the tenderest sensations which I am capable of feeling."

Cropley replied, that he would be content with *them*, till he was able to inspire her with warmer sentiments in his favour; adding, that he hoped she would give him leave to prepare himself, with all speed, for the honour and happiness

piness she designed him. — “Nothing,” continued he, “disturbs me, but the thought of your burying yourself in an obscure corner of the world with me; and such is my situation, at present, that I cannot change it.”

“I would not think of you if you did,” said she—No, it is by the regular, punctual, and conscientious discharge of your duties, as a clergyman, that you have given me so high an idea of you: the obscurity of which you complain, will ever preserve you; I hope, the man of honour, and the affectionate friend. As you have so properly conducted yourself, labouring under two of the most disagreeable wants in the world, to people of taste and discernment, the want of a suitable companion in your retirement, and the want of those little indulgences which

“ which can, alone, render life desirable.
“ I am inclined to believe, that when
“ you have both—(and I flatter myself
“ that it is in *my* power to give you
“ both) your gratitude to providence
“ will excite wishes in you to display
“ more frequently your humanity and
“ charity ; virtues which you have dis-
“ covered upon every occasion, which
“ give the highest lustre to your profes-
“ sion it can receive, and which will
“ render, what you call obscurity, agree-
“ able and profitable to us both.”

Cropley, who had never heard her talk in so serious a style before, in a style so adapted to the engagement into which she was, voluntarily, going to enter, for his sake, could set no bounds to his admiration, or his love—He tore himself, at last, from her, to marry the young people above-mentioned.

Louisa,

Louisa, as soon as he was gone, went to her friends Mr. and Mrs. Rivers, and communicated to *them* what she had done.

The *former* was so much surprised, that he could hardly, at first, believe her; but when he found that she was really in earnest, he lavished on her all the encomiums which she, in his opinion, merited for a conduct so disinterested, and so likely to secure her happiness: a happiness which had the strongest basis, *virtuous affection*. “But indeed, Miss “Ashley,” continued he, smiling, “to “marry a man merely for his virtues, “and to shut yourself up with him in “retirement, in which neither *his* virtues “nor *your* uncommonly excellent qualities can be much known, and consequently, much applauded, is to discover more heroism than will find cre-

“dit

"dit in the polite world. What do
"you imagine Medway will say?"

"I know not, neither do I care," replied she; "yet Cropley and I are, both,
"to thank him for the discovery he made
"of his connection with poor Lucy. I
"have often heard the men say, Rivers,
"that a woman who will be false to one,
"will prove her inconstancy with an hundred: I am sure that half the unhappy
"marriages in the world, are occasioned
"by the falsehood and inconstancy of
"your sex. *She* who imagines that she has
"reason to triumph when she has prevailed on the dear fellow who has deceived numberless women, to attach
"himself legally to her, is under a very
"great mistake: she has, indeed, far more
"reason to imagine, that he will grow as
"weary of her, as he was of those whom
"he deserted on *her* account. When such
"a mis-

“ a mistaken woman is so disappointed,
“ she generally—too often at least—
“ very foolishly flies, in search of conso-
“ lation, to the arms of the first man
“ who addresses a civil speech to her.
“ The husband, naturally incensed at
“ such a conduct, throws off all regard
“ even to common decency, lives a li-
“ bertine at large, and leaves his wife
“ to follow his example. To proceed-
“ ings of this kind we owe the many se-
“ parations and divorces, by which the
“ marriage state is so shamefully dis-
“ graced.

Rivers confessed that she had delivered
some home truths, but added, that he
hoped Hymen would always look on
her and his worthy friend with his most
smiling aspect, accompanied with that
insinuating little rogue Cupid, who had
a wonderful knack at reconciling things

in appearance the most opposite, and at levelling all distinctions.

“I expect to meet with a great deal
“of raillery,” said she, “but those who
“are weak enough to be laughed out of
“their happiness must not hope to find
“much in this world; nor can it indeed
“be properly said that they deserve it.”

“*Your* excellent understanding,” answered Rivers, “and the uncommon
“elegance of your taste, will ever entitle
“you to the highest felicity, and I dare
“affirm that you will enjoy it with
“Cropley, than whom I do not think
“there is a more amiable man existing.”

When the curate returned to the manor the next day he was rather more calm than when he left it, but not quite composed enough to be certain that Louisa had really promised to be his. In order to be thoroughly assured that
what

what he had heard was true, he continually importuned her to confirm his happiness by repeating her intentions in his favour; and he pleaded his cause so successfully, that she consented to make him happy before her friends left Derbyshire: She furnished him also with a sum to purchase a pretty little estate at about a mile and a half from the cottage.

On that estate there was a house, which, with some alterations, could be made very agreeable to them before winter. While it was getting ready, and while the ground was laying out both for profit and pleasure, they were to reside at the manor. The manor, indeed, was rather too far from the village, yet Cropley thought that with a horse in good weather, and a post-chaise in bad, he might perform his duties with his

usual regularity till his house was finished.

The worthy curate's parishioners were pleased with his good fortune, but they were concerned at the thoughts of parting with him; tho' he assured them that he never would leave them till they could substitute a person in his place whom they liked as well.

Peyton and Nancy who had a great friendship for Cropley, rejoiced at his approaching felicity, and at the acquisition of such an agreeable neighbour as Louisa who was to reside entirely in Derbyshire.

Nancy was prevailed on by Louisa to be present at her marriage, tho' her father's dejection on account of Lucy would not have permitted her to leave him for any time had she been totally
indifferent

indifferent with regard to Rivers, whose increased attention about his wife in *her* situation, could not but render every woman partial to him, and who would not consent to her staying any longer in the country, than just to see her friend married, lest she might want assistance not to be procured there.

Mrs. Rivers, very soon after her arrival in London, was brought to bed of a son, who lived, however, to the great grief of his mother, but a few days.

Rivers grieved for the loss of his son, and he was the more sorry as he saw the impression which it made on his amiable wife. He consoled himself, indeed, with thinking that he might have many children, but he was thoroughly convinced that he could never have another wife so fond of him, and so suitable to his taste.

Mrs. Rivers recovered slowly from her lying-in.—Rivers, from a tenderness not always to be met with even in men who marry entirely for love, hired a ready furnished house, when she was able to go abroad, a few miles out of town, for the air; imagining that she was not strong enough to undertake a journey to Derbyshire; tho' she had a great desire to see Louisa in her new character.

Louisa, in her new character, appeared in a very advantageous light; as a clergyman's wife, her behaviour was exemplary, and she made her husband the happiest of men.

Cropley left the manor as soon as his own house was fit to receive him, because it was so much nearer his parish.

Rivers, who kept up a regular correspondence with him very earnestly invited

vited him and Mrs. Cropley to come and spend some time with them in London, as he could not think of suffering Mrs. Rivers to go down into the North, till the weather was more favourable. She wished very much to see her friends, but Cropley and Louisa could not be persuaded to leave a place to which they both thought their duty confined them.

The worthy curate knew that he could not be spared by his parishioners and his amiable wife was fully sensible that life would have no joy for *him* when *she* was absent. She was indeed, truly a help-mate to him, and most chearfully did every thing in her power to make his house the dwelling of felicity.

By her frequent visits to Nancy, and by the natural sprightliness of her disposition, Mrs. Cropley greatly contributed to Mr. Peyton's returning tranquility,

tho' he was still, at times, exceedingly unhappy on Lucy's account, concerning whom Rivers, notwithstanding all his enquiries, had been able to procure no intelligence. As Sir George Medway was gone to France, before his return to London, he knew not where to gain information about her. Sometimes believing that she might have left England, he troubled himself no farther; supposing that if ever she was found she would only occasion perpetual anxiety to her family, and that as she had persisted, in opposition to the advice of all her friends, to act without any regard to her reputation, her father, her sister, and her friends would do well to forget her.

Mrs. Rivers, still continuing indisposed, and the winter coming on, the physicians ordered her to London.

Rivers

THE STORM. 153

Rivers almost shut himself up with her; tho' she said every thing she could to prevail on him to enter into the amusements of the season, telling him that by going to them, and giving her an account of them when he came home, he would afford her a considerable deal of entertainment. It was but rarely, however, that she could induce him to leave her.

One evening, just when he was entering Ruffel Street in his chariot—He was going to Drury Lane theatre, to see a new comedy which had been extremely well received—A loud scream in a female tone made him hastily let down his glass, and put his head out at the window to enquire what was the matter.

The gathering crowd informed him that his coachman had driven over a woman who was crossing the way.

"Heaven forbid," cried he, jumping out among them. He then hurried towards the object in question, who had been raised from the ground where she had fallen merely from her fear, for neither the horses, nor the carriage had touched her.

She was supported by the people, whom she endeavoured to assure that she was not hurt, when Rivers came up to her.

'Tis impossible to describe his surprise and concern when he recognized, by the light of the flambeau which his servant held up, the face of the unfortunate Lucy Peyton, but so changed, by the diseases incidental to a life of incontinence, that he could, at first, scarce believe his eyes. Her excessive confusion, however, convinced him sufficiently that he was not mistaken: yet, from
his

his regard for her father and sister, and from his natural tendency to pity all women in distress, he affected not to recollect her at that instant, because he feared that he should, by so doing, increase her misery.—He insisted, however, upon taking her into his chariot, and upon carrying her home.

Unable to hide any longer the various sensations which almost overpowered her, and which her efforts to conceal had rendered more violent, she cried out, while she turned away her face, now pale as death, now glowing like fire—

“I have no home, no house, no friend,
“no place to receive me; better had I
“been crushed by the wheels which
“seemed so nearly to threaten my destruction,
“than to live the wretch I am.”

“Be composed,” replied Rivers;
“let me conduct you to a place of safety.”

A flood of tears was her answer, while he put her into his chariot, which he ordered immediately to Berkley Square.

“Oh stop, stop,”—cried she; “I will not, cannot see Mrs. Rivers; nor even go to her house; I am not fit to appear before *her*—nor you, nor any person whom I once dared to call my friend. Let me, therefore, intreat you to set me down here, or any where as soon as I have recovered my strength, that I may crawl to the place I came from.”

“I will set you down there,” said he, “if you will tell me where it is; tho’ I had rather carry you to *my* house, where you may be properly attended till you can safely go down to your father, who has not enjoyed any peace since you left him.”

“I never will go down to Derbyshire,” Mr. Rivers, answered she: “I have
but

“but a very short time to live, and can-
 “not bear to see any of those relations
 “and friends who have known me in
 “happier times.—I am but too sensible
 “that I have brought all this load of
 “misery upon myself: I should increase
 “it too much were I to come in their
 “sight; the remembrance of their kind-
 “ness, occasioned by the sight of them,
 “would reproach me in the severest
 “manner.—No—pray order your man
 “to stop, and set me down here.”

Rivers, finding her clamorously eager
 to get from him, consented to let her go,
 but begged her to let him carry her as
 near the place of her abode as possible;
 finding her exceedingly weak, and ill.

She, at last, consented to let him or-
 der the coachman to turn about, and to
 stop at the corner of a passage in Catha-
 rine Street.

The

The coachman obeyed, and Rivers not only handed her out, but led her to the door of a shabby house. She then requested him earnestly, and with a deep sigh, to leave her.

He at last, but with reluctance, complied with her request, putting five guineas into her hand.

She pressed the beneficent hand by way of gratitude, and faintly cried, "God bless you, Mr. Rivers, for your kindness to *me*, for my poor father's sake—Now I shall die in peace."

With these words she went in, and shut the door.

Rivers, instead of going to the play, returned home extremely affected by the scene in which he had just been engaged, and gradually acquainted his wife with it.

Mrs. Rivers joined with her amiable husband in wishing that they could prevail

vail on Lucy to go down to her father. Rivers, imagining that the sight of *him* would be more efficacious than all his persuasions, dispatched an express by break of day to the cottage.—He softened as much as possible, in his letter, the horror of Lucy's situation, yet at the same time informed the good old man, that tho' her appearance was very pitiable, he believed nobody but himself could prevail on her to leave the place she was in.

As soon as Rivers had breakfasted he went to the house in which he had left Lucy, to see how she did, and to ask her if she wanted, if she would accept of, any farther assistance.

He found it difficult to get at her, as she was very unwilling to see him, but half a crown to the miserable wretch who looked after her procured his admittance

mittance into a room without a fire, with hardly any furniture; with bare walls, and with only a wretched bed in it on which she lay covered with rags, a disgusting object.

She blushed, and said that she was ashamed to see him there, but that she ought to be more ashamed for having brought herself into so deplorable a condition.—“I have, indeed, been ill used, “Mr. Rivers,” continued she; “but I “was myself the first cause of all the “misery I have endured.—Had I never “left my father’s house, I might now “have been happy with Mr. Cropley; “but he was too good for me.”

“With him you cannot now be happy,” said Rivers; “but if you will “return to your father, and lead a regular life, you may recover your health, “your person, and your character; and “you

“you may, by your sincere repentance,
 “deserve some other man not less desira-
 “ble than him you deserted.”

“Never,” answered she; “never. Oh!
 “Mr. Rivers, you don’t know how
 “very criminal I have been.”

“The most criminal,” said he, “are
 “to be pardoned for their errors, when
 “they determine to lead new lives.”

It is too late—but—you don’t know
 me. I will tell you what I am: you
 are entitled to the truth from me for
 your attention to me.—She then related,
 though in feeble, and faltering accents,
 interrupted frequently with sighs and
 tears, the following narrative.—“In
 “hopes of drawing in Sir George Med-
 “way, I consented to be his mistress:
 “I then became acquainted with Cap-
 “tain Turton at Southampton, to which
 “place I went in order to draw *him* in
 to

“ to marry me. I was soon, however,
“ prevailed on by *him* to live in the same
“ way as I had lived with Sir George.
“ In a few months after our acquaint-
“ ance, upon his having an ill run at
“ play, I foolishly sold the annuity set-
“ tled on me by Sir George, for a sum
“ which he soon squandered—He basely
“ deserted me when I could no longer
“ supply his wants, and I was obliged
“ to go upon the town for a subsistence.
“ By having increased a disorder which
“ I caught of Captain Turton, I was
“ brought into this situation. I had not
“ a morsel of bread yesterday; I was
“ tortured at once with hunger, and re-
“ morse, and the pangs I felt from them
“ both, almost drove me to distraction.
“ —I was crossing the street, in hopes
“ of being picked up by somebody
“ coming to, or going from, the play,
“ and

“and fell down, fainting with sickness,
“and want of sustenance; your chariot
“drove so near me, that I expected to
“be crushed by it: happy would it
“have been for me,” added she, “if I
“had been crushed immediately: my
“life and my miseries would have then
“been ended together.”

“Say rather,” answered Rivers, “that
“you are happily saved to come to a
“right sense of your weakness, that you
“may, by a sincere repentance, atone,
“in some measure for it.”

“Oh! there is no atonement to be
“made by such a wretch as I am,” said
she—“I dare not hope for mercy.”

“We have all reason to believe,”
replied Rivers, “that mercy is the darl-
“ing attribute of the divine Being; but
“if we are too proud to offer up our
“supplications for it, and too obstinate-

“ly

“ly addicted to any vicious pursuits to
“deserve it——”

“I am, indeed, altogether undeserv-
“ing,” said she, half frantically inter-
rupting him,—“and yet I am not mad
“enough” continued she, “to forget
“what I once was; but I shall be no-
“thing soon—and yet if I cannot pray
“for pardon—Oh! wretch! wretch!”

Here she began to rave, in the wild-
est, and most incoherent manner.

Rivers then stepped out, called in
the woman who was with her when he
came in, and, at the same time, ordered
his servant to fetch his own apothecary
in a hurry.

He sat very humanely by her, till the
apothecary came, who informed him,
that she was in the last stage of a disor-
der, which had been too long neglected

to

to be cured, and that he believed, indeed, she had but a few days to live.

Rivers asked him if she could be moved with safety.

He replied in the negative.

A decent nurse was then thought of by Rivers, to attend her, and sent immediately by the apothecary, who also, at *his* desire, ordered his patient a few palliatives for her present relief.

Rivers having ordered every possible convenience and comfort to be procured for her, in *her* state, left her.

He visited her every day, and found her, every day, growing worse, but more penitent, and more resigned to her fate, always intreating every body about her to pray for her.

On the fourth day, Rivers asked her if she would like to see her father, to take

take leave of him, and to receive his last forgiveness.

She replied—"My father is so good
"that I am sure he will forgive me, and
"therefore I shall be glad to see him:
"but I am afraid I cannot bear the sight
"of my sister: I wish her happy; but
"she does not stand in need of the wishes
"of such a poor creature as I am: she
"has ever been dutiful, and virtuous,
"and, therefore, *must* be happy."

Rivers said no more to her at that time.

The next day Mr. Peyton arrived in Berkley Square: he had left Nancy with Mr. Copley, who thought that she would be too much affected by the joint distress of her father and sister: besides, as Rivers had not been quite explicit, she flattered herself, that Lucy would be

be able to come down to the cottage, and receive considerable benefit from the air and the tranquillity of the country.

Poor Peyton, as soon as he was acquainted with the whole truth relating to his unfortunate daughter's situation, which Rivers communicated to him in the gentlest manner, cried, "Let me go, instantly, to see her; let me hasten to embrace once more, and to forgive, my poor undone Lucy, my lost girl."

Just when he was going to step into the chariot, a gentleman came in upon business to Rivers, and asked him, before he went away, if he had heard that Captain Turton, in consequence of having lost a thousand pounds at a sitting, had shot himself through the head.

"It

“It is not right, I am convinced,” said Rivers, returning to the room in which Peyton waited for him, “to wish evil even to our enemies, but I cannot help telling you, without concern, that the man who reduced poor Lucy to the condition in which I found her, is no more. He is dead; he has been his own executioner: your daughter therefore is revenged.”

“I ask not for revenge,” cried Peyton—“I wish only to see my undone child ere it is too late, that I may endeavour to restore her tranquility, and to convince her, that the loss of her happiness was occasioned by the loss of her virtue.”

Rivers told him that he had better not go, as he was afraid he would be too much affected at the sight of her in an irrecoverable state.

“I will

THE STORM. 769

“ I *will* go,” replied he: “ I *will* see her, though I die with grief at the sight of her.”

Rivers, all the way, strove to fortify him against the distressful scene which would be presented to his eyes.

He made little or no answer, but hastily ascending the stairs, entered the miserable garret in which Lucy lay.

Stretched on her bed poor Lucy lay, a corpse in appearance: She was as cold as clay; her whole person was emaciated, her eyes were haggard; her complexion was as pale as ashes; her lips were livid; her cheeks were sunk; her jaw was fallen.

Peyton hurried to the bed, but she did not turn towards him.—He stood for some moments with his hands clasped in anguish inexpressible. Then, unable to keep silence any longer, he ex-

VOL. II.

I

claimed,

claimed, "My poor, dear, ruined child!
"is this the image of my once innocent,
"blooming Lucy?"

She heard the sound of that well known voice; it struck her, like a dagger, to the heart.

She started, and cried, "My father!
"Oh! my father!—Do not upbraid me.
"I suffer, already, more than can be
"expressed: Yet I would rise and hum-
"bly implore your forgiveness, but I
"have not strength.—I can neither say
"nor do," added she, sinking down in
her bed—"what I would—I have ruin-
"ed myself—If *you* can pardon me—
"Oh! pray to Heaven to—pardon me
"also." The efforts which she had made
to speak to her father, the sight of whom
had deeply affected her, hastened her
dissolution: Convulsions seized her, and
in a few moments she expired.

Rivers

Rivers immediately took hold of Peyton's arm, and dragged him forcibly from the melancholy object before him.

On the stairs they met a young woman tricked out in all the flimsy finery of one of her profession, and followed by a man whom Rivers instantly knew to be Delwyn.

Delwyn, starting, cried, "Rivers?"

"You cannot fly from me here," replied Rivers, "nor can you make any reparation to poor Lucy for your cruel treatment of her; but you may by stepping up, see her murdered by *your* cruelty. It was your behaviour to her, cruelly deceitful, which drew her from her father's house, from his protection and indulgence, to vice and wretchedness."

Delwyn was excessively struck with this address, and with the affecting so-

lemnity with which it was uttered, by a man as young, and as gay, as thoughtless too (he once believed) as himself.

He would have hurried away, but Rivers seized his arm, and dragged him to Lucy's bed. "See there," said he. "This is *your* work; let it, at least, deter you from seducing any more girls from their duty."

Delwyn was then obliged to see what made him shudder with remorse; Lucy dead, and her father hanging over her stupid with grief. Yet, unwilling to own what he felt, he turned hastily from Rivers, saying, at the same time—"I have been to blame—I shall ever think I have been to blame, but had this unhappy girl been possessed of less vanity and pride, she might never have come to so dreadful an end. She would not have made advances to me;

"She

" She would not, afterwards, have re-
 " fused to go home to her father. I am
 " ready to allow, Rivers, that in our
 " commerce with the sex, we take un-
 " fair advantages, yet I will venture to
 " affirm that women are as much to
 " blame as men. There is not one man in
 " a thousand who would offer to compel
 " a woman to give up her virtue; we
 " cannot injure them, therefore, if they
 " will be true to themselves."

Rivers could not deny the justness of these assertions.

" I am sufficiently punished," added
 Delwyn, " for having had any connection
 " with Lucy, as my wife became so jea-
 " lous of me on her account, that I had
 " not a moment's rest.—She quarrelled
 " continually with me, and made me so
 " weary of my life, that I left her in
 " Ireland, and returned to England, in

“order to enjoy a little peace : but this
“meeting has, I confess, greatly dis-
“turbed me.”

The truth is, Delwyn had met the girl, whom he was following up stairs, in the Park, and was invited by her home to her lodgings, but was so much shocked at the sight of Lucy Peyton and Rivers, that he hurried out of the house, and soon afterwards went again to Ireland : He there endeavoured to live upon better terms with his wife, but he never could accomplish his wishes of that kind.

Poor Peyton was so affected and so depressed by the above-mentioned melancholy scene, that Rivers got him home as soon as he could. He retired to the apartment allotted to him for that day, and on the next resolved to return to the cottage, after having intreated Rivers to
have

have the goodness to take care of Lucy's interment.

When he arrived at the cottage, he was seized with a violent fever, which threatened to prove fatal ; but the prescriptions of an excellent physician, and the affectionate attendance of his Nancy, restored his health. The violence of the fever in a short time abated, but it was a great while before he was well.

Soon after the moving event described above, Mrs. Rivers, who had not enjoyed a perfect state of health since her lying in, fell into a decline, and died in about three months, leaving Rivers the sole possessor of her large fortune.

Rivers, indeed, deserved all the consideration which his amiable wife discovered for him, as he had married her purely because he saw that she could not be happy without him. He con-

fined himself closely with her during her illness; but when he had performed the *last duties*, his whole thoughts were turned to Nancy Peyton, whom he had ever, in his heart, preferred to all women. When he had, therefore, allowed a decent time for the expression of his sorrow—for he really both loved, and highly esteemed his wife—he went down to the manor, and, without sending any previous notice, made a visit, from thence, to Cropley.

Louisa wept exceedingly at the sight of Rivers; tears streamed from her eyes, so painful to her was the remembrance of her dear departed friend.

From Cropley's Rivers went to the cottage: his appearance in mourning revived the good father's affliction. The tender attentions which he shewed to Nancy's sorrow for her sister's melancholy

THE STORM. 177

choly fate, caused an unusual glow in her cheeks, which, added to her *dress*, made her look uncommonly handsome.

Nancy, though civil to Rivers, was cold and reserved. By a number of assiduities, he endeavoured to make her sensible of his tenderness for her; and those assiduities, at times, seemed to give her pleasure. She rather tried, however, to conceal, than to discover, her sensations, and by such a behaviour, occasioned him a great deal of anxiety.

Just at the time when he was extremely desirous of producing a favourable alteration in her carriage to him, a young Gentleman, distantly related to the deceased Mrs. Rivers, came into that part of the country, and called at the manor.

Rivers not only received him with great cordiality, out of respect to his

wife's memory, but pressed him to make some stay with him, and introduced him, as his relation and friend, to all his neighbours.

During his residence at the manor, this Gentleman had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with Nancy, and very soon, becoming enamoured, offered very genteel proposals to her : She declined them, however, after having returned the politest acknowledgements.

Brogden—that was his name—acquainted Rivers immediately with what he had done, and with Nancy's unexpected refusal.

Rivers went himself, soon afterwards, to the cottage, secretly exulting at Brogden's disappointment ; Nancy happened to be alone on his arrival.

Sitting

Sitting down by her, and taking hold of her hand, he said to her, "As you have made me inexpressibly happy by rejecting Brogden, may I hope that you have reserved yourself for *me*?"

The abruptness of this question threw her into a prodigious flutter, and it was some time before she was capable of returning any answer.

"You are very sensible, my dearest Nancy," continued Rivers, "of my attachment to you, even when it was not in my power to declare it, and I should not have delayed to solicit your consent, if your coolness had not made me fear I should not be able to gain it.

"*Your* coolness, sir," said she, "at a time when it *was* in your power to obtain it, was more than equal to any which *I* have discovered."

“My dearest girl,” replied he, “I have
“a thousand times reproached myself for
“not having offered myself to you, in-
“stead of Mrs. Banks; but my fortune
“was too small to merit your accept-
“ance—I could not think of distressing
“the woman who deserved so much
“more than I was able to bestow. Be-
“sides, though I loved *you*, Nancy, I
“never had, till you fell ill after my
“marriage, any idea of your having that
“regard for *me*, which was necessary to
“form a happy union between us.—Dur-
“ing Mrs. Rivers’s life, I did all possi-
“ble justice to her uncommon merit;
“but my heart often *felt* severely for
“your sufferings on *my* account, and
“earnestly wished to make you every
“kind of reparation in my power. Let
“me begin, this moment, by giving
“myself, and every thing in my posses-
“sion,

"sion, to you alone, as you alone are
 "capable of making me *enjoy* it."

Nancy blushed and trembled. She was
 pleased to find herself beloved by the
 man whom she had secretly preferred to
 all his sex; but her affection for her
 father interfered, and she replied in a
 faltering voice, "I thank you, Mr.
 "Rivers, for the esteem which you ex-
 "press for me; had it been declared
 "to me before, it would have rendered
 "me compleatly happy; but now things
 "are in a very different train. I cannot
 "think of leaving my father, who has
 "not a single creature left in the world;
 "except me, to take care of him, and
 "to endeavour to lessen the grief he
 "still feels for my poor unhappy sister,
 "whose wretched situation was too pub-
 "lick to be concealed, and censorious
 "people may avail themselves of *her*
 "situa-

h

“situation to level injurious reflections
“at *me*, and, by so doing, lower me in
“your eyes.”

“Banish all such apprehensions, my
“excellent girl,” said Rivers; “your
“own virtues, and exemplary conduct
“will ever be sufficient to silence all the
“aspersions of calumny: It is in the
“highest degree unjust to confound the
“innocent with the guilty. No, my
“Nancy, by your cautious behaviour,
“even at the time when you most lov-
“ed me, you gave me the strongest
“proofs of your discretion and delica-
“cy, and, by your readiness to accept
“of me with nothing, you discovered
“that you were neither prompted by
“pride, nor swayed by interest. I do
“not, my dearest girl, know a more ex-
“alted character; and you are the more
“estimable, as you are not tainted with
“the

“ the slightest degree of vanity, as you
“ have not the smallest spark of affecta-
“ tion. Let me, therefore, drive away
“ all your scruples, by assuring you that
“ I shall ever make it the study of my
“ life to promote your happiness : let
“ me begin by intreating your worthy
“ father to accept of apartments at the
“ manor; at which place you will choose,
“ I imagine, chiefly to reside : those
“ apartments shall be fitted up for him
“ quite agreeably to his taste ; he shall
“ have his own servants ; he shall live, in
“ every respect, as much in his own way,
“ as he has hitherto done ; and we will
“ endeavour, by turns, to soothe his sor-
“ rows, to make him forget his *loss* in
“ his more amiable *surviving* daughter.

Nancy, thus praised, thus caressed,
and thus certain of having every wish of
her heart gratified, beyond her most
flattering

flattering expectations, could hardly articulate a reply, so tumultuous were her emotions. She could only, for several moments, thank her generous lover with tears of tenderness and gratitude. Her lover's fidelity was equal to his generosity, and she not only felt herself, but convinced every body who knew her, that to be *strictly virtuous*, was the only way to be *supremely happy*.

Upon the marriage of Nancy to Rivers, the man whom she had so long loved, her father came to live with them at the *manor*, tho' very unwilling to quit the *cottage* where he had, till Lucy's elopement, enjoyed more peaceful hours than he had known for many years before. When he found himself quite alone there, he began to feel the want of society, and many melancholy reflections on Lucy's unhappy fate. Mr. and Mrs.
Rivers,

Rivers, therefore, thought it highly necessary to insist upon his occupying an apartment in *their* house, and Rivers, that he might not meet with any disturbance, contrived, agreeably to his promise, to have it fitted up in one of the wings, with a pair of stairs detached from the rest of the house. By this contrivance he could go in and out when he pleased, unobserved, and live as if he was in a house of his own. There was a communication, however, between *his* apartments and his daughter's, so that they could have interviews whenever they were inclined to converse with each other.

Nancy, tho' very affectionately attached to her husband, was never forgetful, never regardless of her father: She spent a great part of every day with him, and saw that he had every thing he liked: yet notwithstanding *her* dutiful

ful attentions to him he still exceedingly lamented the loss of Lucy, and her deviation from those virtuous sentiments which he had endeavoured so early, and with much assiduity to instill into her youthful mind. He repined, amidst all the blessings which he enjoyed; he murmured to such a degree that he behaved with a peevishness which he had never till then discovered; a pettishness which rendered him less agreeable not only to Mr. and Mrs. Rivers, but to his acquaintance and neighbours. Copley, who had long known, and esteemed him, became more particularly concerned for him than any body; and the complaints of Mrs. Rivers did not tend to lessen his concern.

“I am very much afraid,” Mrs. Rivers often said, when she was with Mr. and Mrs. Copley, “that my father’s
“per-

"perpetual melancholy and ill humour,
 "which make me extremely unhappy,
 "will destroy our felicity, especially if
 "Mr. Rivers should take notice of the
 "great alteration in his behaviour, and
 "be disgusted at it. Mr. Rivers disco-
 "vers the sincerest affection for me, and
 "no small regard for my father; how
 "hard, therefore, is it for me to see that
 "nothing I can say or do appears to give
 "him the least satisfaction?"

Cropley entirely acquiesced with her,
 and told her that he would try to reason
 Mr. Peyton out of those fits of dejection
 which threw a gloom over every body
 who came in his way.

In order to carry this laudable design
 into execution, Cropley in the first
 place drew from his own mouth the
 cause of his uneasiness; he then, as a
 clergyman, and as a friend, proceeded
 in

in the following manner.—“ I am amazed, Sir, that you who have so dutiful, so valuable a daughter left, should continue to sigh after her who is gone, and who had time to repent sincerely of her errors.—There was room for her to hope for pardon from the throne of mercy.”

Peyton sighed, and said, “ I cannot help thinking every moment of the deplorable situation, in which I found my poor, dying child. And as I, by sheltering Delwyn from the storm, was the original cause of her being tempted to swerve from the virtuous principles in which she had been educated, I must, therefore, ever reproach myself as having been accessory to her ruin.”

“ Indeed, my good friend,” replied Cropley, “ you are mistaken here.—

“ You

" You argue from wrong principles.
 " Can you suppose that the Almighty,
 " whose justice is equal to his mercy,
 " could have intended to punish you for
 " your hospitality, for the laudable ex-
 " ertion of your benevolence to your
 " fellow creatures in distress? Impossi-
 " ble!—Indeed, Mr. Peyton, I did not
 " imagine that you were capable of mak-
 " ing such idle conclusions.—Do not en-
 " tertain sentiments so opposite to reason,
 " so injurious to the divine being. Do
 " but recollect, that tho', by the kind re-
 " ception you gave the strangers, one of
 " your daughters found an opportunity
 " to indulge her too great propensity to
 " pleasure, yet your other more deserv-
 " ing child has, from that very event,
 " been raised to a state of affluence and
 " felicity far beyond her and your ex-
 " pectations. There are events of this
 " kind

“ kind enough very clearly to prove
“ that virtue is frequently rewarded in
“ this world. Lucy was naturally in-
“ clined to give a loose to a pleasurable
“ disposition; had she happened to have
“ met with a man of a more constant
“ turn, tho’ not of a less depraved taste,
“ she might have still been living in a
“ state of licentiousness: she might have
“ been so inured to a course of vice, and
“ to the most criminal indulgence of all
“ her passions, as to have been irre-
“ claimable: She might have quitted
“ the world in a frame of mind suffici-
“ ently distracted to make her tremble
“ at the thoughts of futurity. You
“ have no reason to complain, for in this
“ world of trouble you have received
“ more consolation than comes to the
“ share of every man. We were never
“ designed to be completely happy here.

“ Compleat

"Compleat happiness here would render
 "us so fond of life that we should not
 "think of preparing ourselves for an
 "hereafter.—Reflect, therefore, my dear
 "friend, with gratitude, on the blessings
 "which you have received, and repine
 "not at a disappointment which you
 "ought to bear with composure; espe-
 "cially as you are so greatly recompen-
 "sed for it by the felicity of your sur-
 "viving daughter, and by her unwea-
 "ried endeavours to make your life as
 "comfortable as it is in her power to
 "make it. Blest as you are in the felicity
 "of so exemplary a child, what reason,
 "what right have you to complain?
 "Are we to chuse our fortune in this
 "world? Certainly not.—Very little in-
 "deed are we capable of knowing what
 "is best for us. If you go on tormenting
 "yourself in this indefensible manner,
 "you

“you will undoubtedly, deserve to have
“the blessings, which you, at present
“possess, taken from you: While you
“are thus perpetually discontented,
“while you murmur and repine you
“cannot surely enjoy them. It is our
“duty, and our interest, to learn, early
“in life, a little fortitude, that we may be
“able to support ourselves under the
“pressure of evils to which we are conti-
“nually exposed. It is our duty, it is our
“interest, to be always resigned in the
“most trying, the most disagreeable si-
“tuations into which we can possibly be
“thrown.”

Peyton was obliged to listen to the admonitions and reproofs of his worthy young friend; he was silenced by the home truths he heard, but he did not immediately feel himself convinced by them.

On

On his return to the manor he was informed that Mrs. Rivers, his darling Nancy, had been suddenly taken ill, and that Mr. Rivers was afflicted beyond expression.

He flew to his son, both to gain farther information, and to pour out, with him, the anguish of his heart, upon the melancholy, the alarming occasion.

Rivers, who was half distracted at his Nancy's illness, which arose, he feared, from the anxiety which she had discovered on her father's account, received him with coolness, and was rather inattentive to his complaints. The coolness and inattention of Rivers roused the old gentleman, and made him at last ashamed of his unreasonable behaviour.

Cropley soon followed Mr. Peyton, in order to see his friends at the manor, and to administer all the consolation in his power under their afflictions.

The moment Peyton cast his eyes on Cropley, he cried, with looks, and with accents, which fully denoted the poignancy of his sorrow—"I am punished, my good, young friend; I am punished for my presumption. I was but too happy while my Nancy enjoyed life and health, yet I murmured. I see the consequences of my murmuring. What a wretch am I now?"

"A just sense of our errors," replied Cropley, "with a determination to correct them, is all that is required of us: We cannot, indeed, in any other way, merit the favour of Heaven.—If *that* favour is denied us, however, we must not forget that submission is our indispensable duty."

Hardly had Cropley uttered these words when his servant came, in a great hurry, to tell him, that his mistress had fallen down a flight of steps into the garden,

garden, and that she was very much hurt.

Cropley felt the most piercing grief, but he only, lifting up his hands and eyes to Heaven, prayed for her speedy relief.—“She is a blessing,” added he, with fervour, “which I never expected, “which I never deserved.”

Peyton, looking at him, said that he hoped he should learn patience from so uncommon an example.

Poor Cropley hastened home, and found his Louisa very much disordered. She was with child, he had great reason to expect fatal consequences; he was, therefore, severely shocked.—No man could have felt such a shock more severely, but he never breathed a complaint. He sat by her side, whenever the duties of his profession would permit him, and endeavoured to comfort her, to assist her, and even to amuse her when

she was capable of attending to any thing. When she lay still, or seemed to drop asleep, he ventured to give a loose to his sorrows, but never in a repining strain. Sometimes, when she perceived the big tear rolling down his face, she would put her hand in his, and with the utmost cheerfulness, endeavour to console him; frequently would she hide her own uneasy sensations rather than alarm him: They were at length, for their patient sufferings, rewarded.

Mrs. Cropley recovered; her husband's joy was excessive; it bordered upon frenzy; it diverted her, however. "I am transported," said she often, with her usual vivacity, "that I have been ill. Had I never been out of order, I never should have known how truly you love me."

He shook his head, whenever she talked in that manner, and told her that
he

he hoped she never would want such proofs of his tenderness, tho' he was ready to endure even more than he *had* suffered to give her a single moment's satisfaction.

Nancy recovered not so fast. Rivers had a thousand alarming fears, lest her indisposition should terminate in a hectic.

Bristol was, at last, ordered by the physicians. Rivers and Peyton prevailed on Cropley and his Louisa to accompany them.

The two ladies soon found great benefit from the waters. When they were able to travel, they made several tours round the country; from thence they went to view the finest prospects in Wales, which pleased them so much, that they determined to stay there a week or ten days, and hired commodious lodgings, that every thing might be more agreeable to them.

While they were on their return home, soon afterwards, one evening, from a little excursion, a violent storm arose which lasted all that night, and a great part of the next day, and confined them to the house.

When it subsided towards the evening, they all walked out to view the vessels which had been shattered by it, and to encourage the country people, by intreaties accompanied with money, to assist rather than to plunder the unhappy sufferers.

While they were employing themselves in that commendable manner, they perceived, at a little distance, a man attempting to row himself ashore upon some planks, the remains of a wrecked vessel, with a long pole.

Rivers and Cropley were moved with his distress, for he appeared to be almost naked, and so much spent with the fatigue

tigue of struggling with the waves, that he could hardly support himself: nor could *they* hardly restrain themselves from hurrying to his assistance.

Peyton and the two ladies earnestly intreated them not to hazard their own lives when there were so many people ready to venture theirs, and better able to assist upon such occasions, because more accustomed to them.

The fears and remonstrances of Peyton and the ladies prevailed. Rivers, however, kept his eye fixed upon the affecting scene before him, till he saw the distressed object safely taken into a boat, and rowed ashore.

Eagerly prompted by humanity to enquire if he was alive, and how he did after the danger to which he had been exposed, he recognized the well-known features of Delwyn, tho' they were very much altered by illness and fatigue.

The recollection of their former friendship, and of the distresses which he had occasioned in the Peyton family, added to his then melancholy situation, raised so many different passions in his breast, that he could scarce express himself. He could only repeat his name.

“I am indeed Delwyn, Rivers,” replied he, “and were I likely to live, I should dare to solicit the renewal of our friendship, because I flatter myself that I now am more worthy of it than when we were first acquainted. I have sufficiently atoned, I hope, for my errors, by the torments I have endured from the furious jealousy of my wife, whom I never injured from the time I met you last: but, after having deserved a bad character, the most thorough change in our sentiments can never make some people entertain just sentiments concerning us. How prejudicial,

“dicial, how fatal indeed, is the first
“deviation from the rules of rectitude;
“for we are seldom thought, except by
“a few people of a very liberal way of
“judging, indeed, to be, after such a
“deviation, thoroughly reformed. I as-
“sure you, Rivers, I endeavoured, by
“every method in my power, to make
“my wife, who was a very agreeable wo-
“man before she was seized by that
“restless passion, not only easy, but sa-
“tisfied with me: Yet her perpetual ill-
“humour, and suspicions, added to
“what I felt from my former irregulari-
“ties, threw me into a bad state both of
“body and mind. I again, therefore,
“determined to come to England, to try
“if change of place and air would be of
“any service to me. I confess, however,
“that I felt a repugnance to my voyage,
“when I thought on poor Lucy: but I
“got over it by resolving, on my arrival
“in

“ in England, to avoid every place
“ which might, probably, bring her to
“ my remembrance. A violent storm
“ filled the vessel with water; every per-
“ son on board made the best shift he
“ could, and most of them, being good
“ swimmers, have, I believe, got ashore.
“ I, and another passenger, being un-
“ skilful swimmers, and tired with at-
“ tempting to keep ourselves above wa-
“ ter, ventured upon some planks. A boat
“ received *him*, but *I* was prevented, by
“ a formidable wave from reaching it,
“ and had I not been just now providen-
“ tially taken up by another boat, I must
“ have sunk, being too much weakened
“ to support myself any longer.—The
“ fatigues, however, which I have en-
“ dured, added to disorders which at-
“ tacked me before I left Ireland, leave
“ me no room to hope for a recovery. I
“ do not wish to live; for I cannot enjoy
“ life.—

“ life.—The only consolation I feel, at
 “ present, arises from my being able to
 “ assure you that I have been, for some
 “ time, a new man, and to have an op-
 “ portunity to implore the good old
 “ man’s pardon whose daughter I seduc-
 “ ed, before I die.”

He was too much oppressed to say any more.—He was carried to a neighbour-
 ing house, and put to bed.

Rivers and Cropley then went home with Peyton, who had been greatly agitated during the above-mentioned scene.

“ Your greatest enemy,” said Cropley,
 “ is now, in all probability, very near his
 “ last moments, and appears to be a sin-
 “ cere penitent: he seems to repent sin-
 “ cerely of all his crimes, particularly of
 “ the injuries he has done *you*: Prepare
 “ yourself, therefore, to grant him that
 “ pardon which one christian owes ano-
 “ ther, for no *human creature* can exult
 “ over

“over the sufferings of a *fellow creature*,
“without placing himself in a criminal
“light. Delwyn has been sufficiently pu-
“nished for his unjustifiable behaviour to
“your daughter: but do not you rejoice
“at his punishment; be rather glad to
“hear that he would no longer be capa-
“ble perhaps of committing any more
“atrocious actions, were he to live, from
“the sincerity of his repentance.”

Peyton heard this religious charge with a composure which, as it was unexpected, gave a great deal of pleasure to Cropley, whom he thanked for the care he had taken to set things in a right point of view to him, and assured him that he was exceedingly affected with his unlooked-for meeting with Delwyn, as it brought to his memory his poor unfortunate child.—“I feel myself,” continued he, “very much
“affected by Delwyn’s melancholy situa-
“tion, and am ready to afford him all the
“relief

“relief in my power; for as my dear
“Nancy’s health is restored, I shall no
“longer repine at past events, tho’ I shall
“always reflect upon them with concern.”

Cropley, pleased to find him in so rational a frame of mind, left him, and went to attend Delwyn, who was, notwithstanding all the assistance which had been given him, very near his dissolution, and very desirous of seeing Peyton before it was too late.

Rivers, who was sitting by the bedside of his reclaimed friend, went with Cropley to fetch Peyton.

To Peyton Delwyn addressed himself in the most pathetic manner. He first, thanked him for the hospitable reception which he had given him: he then fervently implored his forgiveness of the ill return he had made for it; adding, that he hoped he would not, on *his* account, shut his friendly door, for the future, against
any

any object in the same distressful condition.—“It is better,” continued he, “that many guilty wretches should be relieved, than that one innocent person should perish: you might have, possibly, served a tender parent, an affectionate husband, a virtuous lover, instead of a lawless, abandoned libertine. Remember, Sir, that by receiving, by assisting *me*, you received, you assisted, at the same time, your Rivers—your future son—the husband of your excellent Nancy.”

Peyton could hear no more.—“Oh! God!” cried he, “how could I repine a moment? How dared I to murmur at the just decrees of providence?”—He then pressed the dying hand of Delwyn, and, lifting up his eyes, added, “The forgiveness of such a poor frail creature as *I* am can be of no service,
“but

“but I sincerely implore the merciful
“father of all to pardon thee.” —

Rivers and Cropley turned away their faces to hide their manly tears, that Delwyn might not be too much affected by them; but he intreated them to give him the last satisfaction he should ever enjoy, the satisfaction of seeing their honest, friendly, laudable emotions.—Then pressing each of their hands to his cold lips, he wished them happy. To Rivers he gave a letter to be forwarded to Mrs. Delwyn; after that request, he begged to have a moment to himself. In about half an hour after they left him, he expired.

Rivers, tho' he would have been glad to have taken his family from the melancholy spot immediately, could not bring himself to leave it till he had paid the last duties to his unhappy friend.—They then returned to the manor. Time and change of place gradually wore out the
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recollection of a very affecting event, which had, however, been of no small service to Mr. Peyton, by making him sensible, that tho' he had met with a considerable shock in the loss of *one* child, who had never been of a disposition to render herself or her family happy, he was still amply blessed in the felicity of the *other*, who was most fortunately formed to enjoy happiness herself, and to communicate it to every body about her.

F I N I S.